

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

The following website also provides useful information:

<https://myhealth-devon.nhs.uk/>

Guidance for Patients

Getting prepared to have surgery or a procedure is all about good preparation for your body and mind.

During this time, you can take simple steps to improve your physical and mental health.

Benefits of this include:

- Enhanced recovery following treatment.
- Reduced post-op complications.
- Reduced length of stay in hospital.
- Improved fitness.
- Improved nutritional health.
- Enhanced quality of life.
- Provides an opportunity to stop smoking and drinking alcohol.

Take Your Medication

You should continue to take your medications as usual, as directed by your GP and/or hospital specialist. You will be advised what medication to continue and what you may need to stop before you come into hospital. You should ensure that your list of medication on your GP records is accurate and up-to-date prior to having a procedure or operation. Remember to always bring a list of current medications, vitamins, herbal remedies and supplements you take with you to any appointments.

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Keep Moving

People who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing many long term (chronic) conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing stress and clinical depression.

Whatever your age, being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life:

<https://myhealth-devon.nhs.uk/local-services/health-lifestyle-wellbeing>

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- [One You Eat Better](#) (website) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
- [Better Health - Get Active](#) (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.

Improve Your Health

To support local people to stop smoking or lose weight, there are a number of services that can help:

- For Plymouth residents - [OneYouPlymouth](#) - 01752 437 177
- For Torbay residents - [Torbay Healthy Lifestyles](#) - 0300 456 1006
- For residents in Devon County Council area - [OneSmallStep](#) - 0800 298 2654
- For residents in Cornwall - [Healthy Cornwall](#) – 01209 615600

To find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. Use this tool to find out your BMI. If it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight BMI of 30+

If your BMI is 30 or higher, you qualify for free support.

BMI of 28+

You can also get free support, if your BMI is 28 or over if at least one of the following applies:

- you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome
- you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension, or high blood pressure
- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma

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- you are from a black or ethnic minority background.

BMI of 25+

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher, Better Health Let's Do This – Lose Weight website provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12-week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12-week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

Alcohol Support:

- [Together Drug & Alcohol Service](#), Devon - 0800 233 5444
- [Torbay Drug and Alcohol Service](#), Torquay - 01803 604330
- [Harbour Drug & alcohol services](#), Plymouth - 01752 434343

Good Mental Health

Looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused uncertainty for everyone, and there has never been a more important time to take care of your mental health. Mental health and emotional wellbeing affect all aspects of our lives and health choices. Mental wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well, as individuals and as communities. It is also about our ability to cope with life's problems and making the most of life's opportunities.

MyHealth Devon Supporting My Mental Health Hub:

<https://myhealth-devon.nhs.uk/my-condition/supporting-my-mental-health>

For information on support local to you, please visit:

<https://myhealth-devon.nhs.uk/my-condition/supporting-my-mental-health/support-local-to-me>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

It is important to advise us if you have an infection before your admission date because it may be better to postpone the operation. It is very important to tell us if you have any unusual bleeding or bruising problems, or if this type of problem might run in your family.

Urgent Health Advice

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For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit <http://www.nhs.uk/>. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

GP surgeries

GP practice staff are helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments.

GP surgeries are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, paramedic or GP.

To find a GP practice near you with relevant contact details visit the following website: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-GP>