

My planned care patient information

Introduction

Over the last two years, the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide routine elective services. We recognise across University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust that patients are waiting longer than we would like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. We are doing all that we can to see as many patients as quickly as possible, including opening our new Outpatient Assessment Clinic at Beales department store in the Dolphin Centre in Poole (www.uhd.nhs.uk/about-us/think-big).

We are also doing electronic validation to contact patients on our waiting lists. All this will help us to consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen. This process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

The information below is for patients who are still awaiting treatment or a follow up appointment. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care to help you to support yourself while waiting to attend an appointment. When you are waiting for further treatment it can sometimes feel like a long wait and we know what affect this can have on your condition and on your mental health. The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health.

Prepare yourself for surgery

'Prehabilitation' is all about good preparation for your body and mind prior to surgery. In the time before your surgery, you can take simple steps to improve your physical and mental health. This will reduce your risk of complications and improve your wellbeing now and in your recovery.

Research shows that people who keep mentally or physically active feel happier and so become healthier. Maintaining and improve your overall wellbeing will lead to a faster recovery if you require surgery.

Once you are referred by your GP the waiting journey begins. Make the most of the time before you see your specialist.

For more information and advice you can watch the helpful video from the [Royal College of Anaesthetists](#) - *Preparing for surgery: Fitter Better Sooner*

Information about your condition

Further information may be found on the Our Dorset health video library. The library contains simple and engaging videos to help our patients access quality and assured health information,

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

which have been developed and approved by NHS clinicians. These videos offer a practical alternative to written information and aim to help our patients take better control of their health, and provide education and support to manage long term health conditions. They can be accessed by following this link –

[Our Dorset Health Videos](#)

Continue to take your medication

While waiting continue your medicine taking as directed by your GP and hospital specialist. At the pre-op assessment make sure you know the medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements you take and you'll be given clear information on whether you should stop taking your usual medicines before going into hospital.

Continue to take your medication as prescribed. If you need to stop any medication prior to your operation, you will be advised of this when contacted and given a date for your surgery.

You will be advised to continue with your normal medications, but you may be advised to stop some medications before your procedure, your clinician or pre-operative nurse will provide you with this information.

Physical health

Exercise regularly: Among other benefits, better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. This allows you to leave hospital and return to your normal quality of life more quickly. Keeping an active lifestyle is good for your health and if you are normally an active person it is important to keep that up before your procedure. People with low activity levels can improve their fitness levels within as little as four weeks prior to their procedure. This gives you an opportunity to get fitter before your procedure and improve your chances of a better and quicker recovery. Public Health Dorset has information on physical activity with local guides at: www.publichealthdorset.org.uk/your-health/physical-activity

Improve your health

LiveWell Dorset supports access to a range of Public Health Dorset commissioned pathways and community activities. Funded by Public Health Dorset, the [LiveWell Dorset service](#) is free for all adults living in Dorset. It's a simple, no-sweat solution to introducing better health and wellbeing into your world:

- weight management – provides access to one fully-funded weight loss programme (Healthy Choices) for people who meet a certain criteria. LiveWell Dorset is the only access point for Healthy Choices. Weight management coaching and ongoing support through brief interventions is available for people not meeting the Healthy Choices criteria, and to supplement Healthy Choices provision
- smoking – refers into the smoking cessation service delivered in pharmacies which offers Nicotine Replacement Therapies while also providing a range of free additional information, guidance and support
- physical activity – identifies and signposts individuals to community activities alongside offering behavioural support for people to become more active. If you are worried about a patient's ability to exercise safely, they should be in a supported environment with a fully trained exercise instructor.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

- alcohol – deliver brief interventions to help reduce alcohol consumption levels, and can provide eligible people access to appropriate local services if they have more serious problems with alcohol

<https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/>

You can also sign up to one of our free Virtual Health MOTs. This 20-minute confidential 1-2-1 session is designed to assess lifestyle choices with a member of the LiveWell team. [Book now for free on Eventbrite!](#)

Why is it free? Public Health Dorset is a partnership of Dorset Council and BCP Council. They partner with Dorset's local authorities, the NHS and others to provide this healthy lifestyle advice and coaching.

Good mental health

Looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health. The coronavirus pandemic has caused uncertainty for everyone, and there has never been a more important time to take care of your mental health. We are working with partners across Dorset to support the mental health of Dorset residents and people working on the frontline of the coronavirus response. You can find lots of mental health and wellbeing advice on the Dorset HealthCare website.

If you are feeling constantly worried or depressed, or you are worried about someone else's mental health, you can call Connection, Dorset's 24/7 mental health helpline, on 0800 652 0190.

Working with partners from Dorset's integrated care system, we have coordinated a wellbeing offer for our organisations' employees as we face unprecedented challenges during COVID-19.

Good Mental Health <https://www.publichealthdorset.org.uk/your-health/mental-health>

Mental health support

It is estimated that one in four of us will experience mental health problems during our lives. Dorset HealthCare provides a range of services to help people through their illness and towards recovery. They aim to empower you, or your loved one, to achieve your goals and lead a fulfilling life.

They have specialist, experienced staff who provide care and treatment for conditions such as depression, schizophrenia and [eating disorders](#); conditions such as [Asperger's Syndrome](#) and [dementia](#); [drug or alcohol dependency](#), and problems relating to [pregnancy and childbirth](#). They offer specific help for [children and young people](#), as well as people with [learning disabilities](#).

[You can also click here for a guide to mental health services in Dorset.](#)

Many of these services require referral from a GP or another health/social care professional. If you do not meet the criteria for support, the professional should be able to signpost you elsewhere for help. You can also find a full list of local mental health services on [Dorset HealthCare's website here](#).