

Ophthalmology - Cataract surgery

Introduction

The COVID-19 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 are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

When you are waiting for further treatment it can sometimes feel like a long wait. 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.

The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider has 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.

The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

Guidance for Patients

Before attending your assessment in clinic, you will receive a health questionnaire that is required to be completed and brought with you on the day of your clinic appointment. You can have a family member or carer help you with this if you want.

During the clinic assessment, you will meet several people including a cataract surgeon and the specialist cataract nurse. You may require further assessments depending on your health needs. The aim of this is to find out what problems you are having with your vision and to obtain measurements of your eye which help us to plan surgery. It is important that you do not drive to your appointment as you will need to have your pupils dilated with eye drops. These cause blurry vision for a few hours.

If you wear contact lenses, to ensure we get the most accurate measurements of your eyes when planning surgery, you must leave your contact lenses out before your appointment. For Soft lenses: leave them out for at least one week. For Hard lenses: leave them out for at least four weeks.

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The contents of this information has been reviewed and approved by the Surgical Care Group Board of University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

You will be able to have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have along the way prior to surgery.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your vision isn't good or worsens, your eye remains sensitive to the light or your eye becomes sore and/or red or sticky for more than a few days. If your eye becomes very painful and painkillers aren't relieving the pain; if you experience a shower of floaters and flashing lights, then you must contact the Eye Emergency department. They are open 7 days a week, Monday- Friday 8-5pm, 08:30-5:30pm Saturdays and 08:30-2pm Sundays. The telephone number is : 0300 019 4181

Urgent Health Advice

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 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.

Contact Us

If you have any concerns or questions you can contact the following departments for assistance:

Eye unit ward: 0300 019 6062

Hospital switchboard and please ask for your consultant's secretary:

01202 303626

Admissions: 0300 019 4366

Appointment enquiries: 0300 019 4355