

Ophthalmology - Cataracts

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

Cataracts are when the lens of your eye, a small transparent disc, develops cloudy patches. If your optician has confirmed that you have cataracts you will be referred to a specialist eye doctor for an assessment. Cataract surgery involves replacing the cloudy lens inside your eye with an artificial one. At the assessment your doctor will discuss cataract surgery with you in detail and whether this is the right option for you.

Whilst you are waiting for their procedure, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

LiveWellDorset provide free advice and coaching should you wish to lose weight, get active, drink less or quit smoking.

Call on freephone 0800 840 1628

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Or register online at livewelldorset.co.uk

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Cataracts generally cause a gradually progressive reduction in sight, any sudden reduction in sight or other symptoms such as flashing lights, floaters, a localised blind spot/shadow in your peripheral vision, distortion of your central vision particularly when looking at straight lines or redness or pain in your eyes would not be caused by cataract. If you experience any of these symptoms while waiting, you will need to seek help soon from your GP or optician.

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

Consultant: Usama.Faridi@dchft.nhs.uk

Secretary 01305 255300