

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide some routine 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 information is updated weekly and anyone can access it including your carer, friends, relatives and the NHS team caring for you.

You don't need to ring your GP, or the hospital caring for you for an update on waiting times because all the information is available on the My Planned Care website.

This guidance has been supported by clinicians who are responsible for your care to support and to help keep you well whilst waiting for your procedure.

### Ophthalmology: Cataract Surgery

#### Introduction

**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. Cataracts can affect one or both eyes.**

#### Guidance for Patients

Cataracts normally develop very slowly. At first, the changes they make to your sight may be difficult to notice, but as they get worse you'll start to notice symptoms such as:

- You feel like your glasses are dirty and need cleaning, even when they don't.
- Your sight is misty and cloudy.
- You're more sensitive to light – bright sunlight or car headlamps may glare more.
- Everything looks a little more washed out than it should be.

Eventually, almost all people with cataracts will find that their sight has turned misty or cloudy, and things have become difficult to see all of the time.

Cataracts sometimes develop so slowly that you might not notice the changes in your vision, but when you have your regular eye test, your optometrist (also known as an optician) may detect them and refer you to a hospital.

If you have cataracts in both eyes, they will be removed separately. You'll have one eye

operated on and then once this eye is healed, you'll have the cataract in your other eye removed.

Developing cataracts is a normal part of growing older. Most people start to develop cataracts after the age of 65, but some people in their forties and fifties can also develop cataracts.

Certain things make it more likely that you will develop cataracts:

- Diabetes – people who have diabetes often develop cataracts earlier.
- Trauma – having an eye injury can cause the injured eye to develop a cataract.
- Medications – some prescription drugs can cause cataracts, for example steroids.
- Eye surgery – surgery for a retinal problem will likely lead to cataracts in the affected eye at some point in the future.
- Eye conditions – other eye conditions, such as retinitis pigmentosa, glaucoma or uveitis, may also cause cataracts.
- Having high myopia (being very short sighted) may cause cataracts.

Cataracts caused by aging, medications and other eye conditions usually develop in both eyes. Cataracts caused by an eye injury or eye surgery only develop in the affected eye. Despite the different causes, most cataracts are dealt with using the same type of surgery. Some children have cataracts, which are dealt with in a different way. RNIB has information on congenital cataracts (also known as childhood cataracts) on their website.

### How you can support yourself while you wait for your procedure

There are things you can do whilst you wait for your procedure to make you sure you are as healthy and strong as you can be. This will increase your chances of a better recovery. In the time leading up to your procedure, be sure to take good care of yourself by taking a few smart steps. This can help you avoid complications. Follow these simple tips to ensure the best possible outcome and prepare for a successful recovery.

### Take Your Medication

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.

### Improve Your Health

- Stick to healthy foods - Your body needs good nutrition to fight infection and heal following your procedure.
- Avoid dehydration - drink at least six-eight glasses of fluid per day, preferably water.
- Avoid constipation - drink plenty of fluids and increase the amount of fibre in your diet. If this does not help you can attend your local pharmacy for over the counter remedies.

### Smoking

If you are coming into hospital for a procedure, and you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to stop smoking as soon as possible because this will help to improve wound healing, lung function and you will make the best possible recovery. Now is a better time than ever to stop smoking. Smoking before procedure puts you at a higher risk for post-operative heart attacks, stroke, blood clots, pneumonia and even death.

**The Smokefree Norfolk** service provides a range of options to help you quit including podcasts, stop smoking medications and e-cigarettes. The information can be accessed at [www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk).

### Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on your body but importantly it can reduce your body's ability to heal. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits or lower to improve your ability to heal after your procedure.

### Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE) before procedure

There are natural ways and lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of developing blood clots, these include

- Staying active: make a point of moving every 30-60 minutes to ensure you keep your blood flowing
- Regular exercise – simply walking for 30 minutes a day is a great way to keep your circulation moving
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Keep hydrated.

Your doctor will assess your risk of developing a blood clot when you come into hospital and order a treatment plan to minimise your risk. This may include prescribed medications before or after procedure, or when you go home, to prevent blood clots.

### Keep Moving

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 4 weeks. This gives you an opportunity to get fitter before your procedure and improve your chances of a better and quicker recovery.

### Good Mental Health

It is normal to be anxious about having a procedure, relaxation, mindfulness, and breathing exercises can all help. It's important that you ask for help if you feel you need it, and your GP practice can advise you on support in your local area.

Please keep in touch with your GP or mental health professional if you are already under their care for depression or anxiety.

There is also a range of mental health support available locally – please look at the website for more information:

<https://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/> or phone them on 0300 123 1503.

Other local support services can be found on [the NHS website](#)

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## General information

Please watch this useful [video](#) from the Royal College of Anaesthetists which offers advice on preparing for a procedure.

There is also some useful information available on keeping well on the [Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System \(While you wait - Norfolk and Waveney CCG\)](#) website.

Further information about local services offering support in Norfolk and Waveney is available [here](#).

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel that there is a change in your condition please contact your clinical team through the hospital switchboard.

If your condition suddenly worsens whilst you are waiting you should seek advice.

## 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. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Life Threatening Emergencies

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

## Contact Us

Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System have developed the [While you wait - Norfolk and Waveney CCG](#) to provide you with information about waiting for hospital treatment.