

Breast service – First Outpatient Appointment

Whilst you are waiting for your first appointment with the breast team, you may find it useful to read this patient leaflet which we hope you will find helpful.

At Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust we provide all breast outpatients services for those requiring diagnosis or receiving treatment in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys. Approximately 18,000 patients will visit the Breast Service every year. The Breast Care Service in Shropshire has been established since 1989, and is recognised for providing excellent patient care. Our team is dedicated to patient-focused treatment.

Our service specialises in the treatment of all breast conditions. Each year the service deals with more than 500 new breast cancers and a wide range of benign disease. Our services include outpatient diagnostic clinics, breast screening services, treatment clinics and follow-up clinics.

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

What to expect at your first appointment

The Breast team consists of a number of clinicians, both male and female. There may be a need to carry out some tests at your appointment. Some of these can be uncomfortable but every effort is made to minimise any discomfort or distress that may be experienced. The following are the most common investigations performed in by the breast team:

Mammogram - a mammogram is a breast X-ray. The breast is compressed between two special x-ray plates. Some women find this uncomfortable but it only lasts a few seconds.

Ultrasound scan - an ultrasound scan uses high frequency sound waves to produce an image of the breast. The scan is painless and only takes a few minutes.

Core biopsy - should this test need to be performed, you will receive a local anaesthetic, and a tiny incision is then made in your skin. A small biopsy device is inserted, which extracts a small piece of breast tissue for examination. Sometimes this has to be done using mammogram or ultrasound equipment. The results from this test are not available at your first visit, as they take a number of days to process.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

If you would like to visit our website for more information on the breast service, the details are as follows:-

www.sath.nhs.uk/wards-services/az-services/breast-service

Guidance for Patients

Whilst you await your first Breast Service appointment, there are many things that you can do to support your health and wellbeing. The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust website includes a variety of useful information including health and support with mental wellbeing, addiction, guidance for parents and carers, exercise and practical help that you may find useful. You can find the website using this link:

www.sath.nhs.uk

Take Your Medication

Whilst you are waiting for your first Breast Service outpatient appointment, it is important that you continue to take any medication prescribed to you by either your GP or another hospital doctor. This may include medication specific to the condition and medication for other conditions but importance for general health maintenance eg. pain medication for specific condition and statins for overall health. If you feel that you need a review of your medication, please contact your GP.

Keep Moving

Keeping active is great for not just your physical health – it can help with your emotional well-being too. If you are able to, a 20 minute walk each day can help protect your heart, support effective weight loss, keep your memory sharp, improve your mood and help you sleep better. Walking for Health is an NHS website that provides more information on how to exercise safely. You can find the website at www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health

Improve Your Health

Stopping smoking is easier if people in your life support you. Let them know you are planning to quit smoking so they can help. There is a Smokefree National Helpline manned by expert advisors available between 9am and 8pm. You can call them on 0300 123 1044. For details of services available locally in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin visit www.shropshiretelfordandwrekinccg.nhs.uk/health-advice/stop-smoking If you live in Powys you may wish to search <https://pthb.nhs.wales/services/virtual-and-online-services>

Good Mental Health

Stress is a natural reaction to life factors such as health, school, work family etc. Sometimes our problems can lead to low mood or something more serious. The following are just some of the ways that have been shown to improve mental health and wellbeing: get active, have lunch with a friend, try a new hobby, learn new skills, meditate or practice yoga. If you feel you need more support whilst you wait for your hospital appointment you may wish to contact the following community Services:

- Shropshire/Telford & Wrekin ACCESS service. Call 0300 124 0365 or email shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk
- Telford Primary Care Wellbeing Service. Call 01952 457415 or email telford@mpft.nhs.uk
- Powys Mental Health Information Service. Call 01686 628300 / 01597 822191 or visit the Powys Mental Health website www.powysmentalhealth.org.uk

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel that your health has deteriorated since you visited your GP, our advice is that you make an appointment to see your GP as soon as you are able. If the deterioration is linked to this referral, your GP is the person who can contact this hospital with a request to upgrade your referral, if this is appropriate.

Contact Us

If you have any concerns or questions that you need support with, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a great place to start. You can call 01743 261691 for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital or 01952 641222 ext 4382 for the Princess Royal Hospital. They will listen to you and advise you how they can help. If you would prefer to get in touch by email, please contact sath.pals@nhs.net