

Respiratory - First Outpatient Appointment

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.

The respiratory team have been particularly affected by the covid pandemic as they have and continue to be responsible for the care of inpatients with covid at the hospitals and have had an increase in referrals over the last years.

We offer a comprehensive service for most of the wide range of respiratory conditions including COPD., asthma, bronchiectasis, TB, Interstitial lung disease and cancer, and are supported by a multidisciplinary team of nurses, physiotherapists and physiologists.

Please note that if you are referred for an assessment of possible Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) that you should be aware that we can only screen for this condition and you would be referred to another Trust for treatment if required.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Guidance for Patients

While you are awaiting your appointment, we recommend if you smoke that you consider stopping. Support is available from www.livewelldorset.co.uk

Information and support relating to respiratory conditions is available via the British Lung Foundation website on the following link:

<https://www.blf.org.uk/>

This includes advice on managing your symptoms and health and we recommend you look at this resource.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you have concerns about your symptoms, please contact your GP. If they feel your appointment needs to be expedited then they will contact us.

GP surgeries are still open and are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

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 concerns about your symptoms, please contact your GP. If they feel your appointment needs to be expedited then they will contact us

If you are known to have COPD you could contact our specialist nurses

Poole DAIRS 0300 019 8483 - Working hours 8am-430pm 7 days a week

Bournemouth DAIRS 0300 019 6122 - Working hours 8am-4pm 7 days a week

Version 1: March 2022

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