

Orthopaedics - 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.

Guidance for Patients

We understand you are currently awaiting a date for your first outpatient appointment. We endeavour to keep this wait as short as possible but we hope you appreciate there are currently delays. The COVID pandemic has had an effect on waiting lists. We can only offer our apologies and we are working hard to keep up with the demand on our orthopaedic services and clear our backlog.

In the meantime please see the links below which allow you to increase your knowledge of the procedure and how you may be able to best prepare yourself for your future operation.

Waiting Well

Version 1: March 2022

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

<https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/>

LiveWellDorset is a service which can help with weight loss, smoking cessation and increasing activity levels. All of these can benefit you prior to your surgery. They will reduce the risk of surgery and may help with the severity of symptoms. They have helpful information to read and you may be able to speak to a trained health coach to plan how best achieve any goals you may have.

Your Condition

<https://www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets/orthopaedics>

This link is to the patient information leaflets provided by the orthopaedic department regarding the procedure you are due to have. You should have been offered one in clinic however this will allow you to download a copy as needed – Knee replacement

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>

This NHS website can help you understand more about the surgery but also about the condition which have led to the need for surgery. It is arranged in alphabetic order and of particular interest to you will be the sections on osteoarthritis and knee replacement surgery

Still unsure if surgery is right for you?

<https://dorset.medicaldecisions.co.uk/>

While you have currently been placed on the waiting list for a total knee replacement this link can provide some further information if you have any reservations or if you find your particular symptoms may have changed. It can also help understand the doctor's decision making process in offering you joint replacement surgery.

Struggling with your mental health?

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

Unfortunately longer waiting times can have a detrimental impact on your mental health. This can be as a direct result of your symptoms but also due to many other reasons. You may struggle with money worries, isolation, loss of independence and poor sleep to name but a few. The above website is there to try and help recognise these issues for you and help get you support if you need it.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

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

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.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Life Threatening Emergencies

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

Contact Us

If you should have any questions please contact any of the following departments:

Hospital switchboard

please ask for your consultant's secretary:

01202 303626

Admissions: 0300 019 4919

Appointment enquiries: 0300 019 4740