

### General Surgery – First Outpatient Appointment

General Surgery is the branch of surgery that covers the main areas of surgical treatment. General surgeons treat diseases of the abdomen, breast, head and neck, blood vessels, and digestive tract. They also manage care of patients who have been injured as well as other conditions that need surgery

#### 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.

#### Guidance for Patients

Whilst you await your first General Surgery 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](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

#### Take Your Medication

Whilst you are waiting for your first 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](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health)

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

### 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](http://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](mailto:shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk)
- Telford Primary Care Wellbeing Service. Call 01952 457415 or email [telford@mpft.nhs.uk](mailto: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](http://www.powysmentalhealth.org.uk)

### 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](mailto:sath.pals@nhs.net)