

Neurology - 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 Dorset Neurology Service provides assessment and treatment for patients with neurological conditions throughout the whole county. We see a wide variety of patients including those with headache, epilepsy/seizures/blackouts, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Motor Neuron disease and neuropathy as well as other conditions. We are based at Poole Hospital and provide outreach to Dorset County and Royal Bournemouth Hospitals.

The service is delivered by a consultant-led multidisciplinary team which provides assessment, diagnosis and treatment of neurological conditions. We work closely with colleagues including nurse specialists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, spinal surgeons, neurosurgeons and psychologists. We have links with the local neurosciences centre in Southampton (Wessex Neurological Centre).

We provide:

General neurology clinics - often where patients are first seen for assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

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

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Dedicated clinics for Headache, Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neuron Disease, Parkinson's disease, Botulinus toxic for Dystonia, Atypical parkinsonian conditions and a three monthly neuromuscular clinic.

Guidance for Patients

How to make the most of your consultation:

- Check your appointment letter carefully to make sure you have the right date, time and place.
- Allow sufficient time for parking
- Ask for an interpreter or communication support if needed.
- It is often very useful to ask a friend or family member to come with you. This particularly applies to appointments for blackouts/loss of consciousness or if your memory has been affected.
- Videos can be useful - particularly of blackouts/seizures or abnormal movements.
- Write down details of your symptoms, including when they started and what makes them better or worse.
- Write down your two or three most important questions.
- List or bring all your medicines and pills – including anything you buy over the counter such as vitamins and supplements.
- Think about the clothing you are going to wear so that you feel comfortable and so that it is possible for you to have a medical examination easily.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

In many neurological conditions deterioration can be caused by common illnesses such as seasonal viral illnesses (flu etc), urine infections etc. If you have symptoms suggestive of these then this should be considered in the first instance and discussed with your doctor.

If you are known to one of the specialist therapy teams then they should be the first port of call (Epilepsy nurse specialist, Parkinson's nurse specialist, MS team) if your symptoms are concerning, not related to another illness and not settling on their own. You would have the relevant contact details for the appropriate team if this were the case.

Support Groups and Further Information:

Parkinson's UK

-Parkinson's disease and Movement Disorders

-Parkinson's UK: Homepage | Parkinson's UK (parkinsons.org.uk)

-PSP Association PSPA – PSPA is a national charity providing support and information to people living with PSP and CBD while funding research into treatments and ultimately a cure. (pspassociation.org.uk)

-MSA Trust: Multiple System Atrophy Trust (msatrust.org.uk)

Motor Neuron Disease

-MND Association: <https://www.mndassociation.org/>

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Multiple Sclerosis

-MS trust: <https://mstrust.org.uk/>

-MS Society: <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/>

Myasthenia Gravis

-MyAware: <https://www.myaware.org/>

Headache

-<https://www.headache.org.uk/>

-Migraine Trust: <https://migrainetrust.org/>

Functional Neurological Disorder

-Neurosymptoms.org: https://www.neurosymptoms.org/en_GB/

-FND Hope: <https://fndhope.org/>

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

PA to Dr Ralph Gregory & Dr Peter Grenholm

Janice Scott: 0300 019 2168

PA to Dr Rupert Page & Dr Charles Hillier

Nakita Litchfield: 0300 019 3049

PA to Dr Shafqat Memon & Dr Luke Massey

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