

Haematology – First Outpatients Appointments

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 recommend that you ensure that your vaccinations are up to date, particularly covid and seasonal influenza. We will be able to give further guidance about other vaccination requirements when you attend clinic.

It is anticipated that your GP will have provided you with some advice for your wellbeing prior to your appointment with Haematology.

Many patients find it helps to prepare what they want to talk about in their appointment. It can be helpful to write a list of the things you want to discuss. This could include:

- All your symptoms

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

- Medicines you're taking including prescriptions, medicines you've bought yourself and alternative treatments. You can bring the medicine packets or your prescriptions with you, or take photos of them
- Any allergies you have
- Any questions or concerns
- Anything your GP has recommended you ask the healthcare professional

If you cannot attend your appointment at the time you've been given, contact the hospital or clinic to rearrange it. It may help to have your NHS number with you when you contact them.

Allow plenty of time for your visit, especially if this is your first appointment. You may have to wait if your healthcare professional's other appointments over-run or they are called away to an emergency.

Please be aware that at this appointment you may not have all your questions answered and further tests or diagnostics may be scheduled as a result of your visit. Please do not be concerned this is an important part of the pathway for each patient.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your symptoms are worsening, especially symptoms such as fatigue, breathlessness, bruising or sweats, your GP might wish to repeat your blood tests as an interim while you are waiting for your clinic appointment. If you remain concerned, please ask your GP to reassess your condition as they may seek to change the nature or urgency of your referral.

Try to reduce your risk from catching airborne infections from your friends and family - avoid mixing with people who have colds, flu or COVID and try to use a mask when in crowded places.

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

Please see the DCHFT Trust Website, there are a variety of patient information leaflets across most specialities (please see link below): Patient Information Leaflets dchft.nhs.uk

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