



# Orthopaedics – Fusion of toe joint surgery



## Introduction



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability for the NHS to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place.

Our waiting lists have been clinically reviewed to ensure patients are seen in priority order and we continue to monitor these lists. This may mean you wait longer for your care, but we will be in touch as soon as possible with details of your appointment.

This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

## Guidance for Patients

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your Doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or Doctor's surgery.

Consider appropriate footwear that does not rub on the painful toe – footwear should have low/no heels, firm soles and with straps or laces. Slip on shoes should be avoided.

We here in the Orthopaedic Department at Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust want to help you manage your osteoarthritis during these challenging times, when the delays to normal elective surgery, mean you are not getting your surgery as quickly as we would like. There are some very useful websites that can help you to manage some of the symptoms you are experiencing and guidance regarding help and support that you may be able to access.

**Age UK** - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/arthritis>

Age UK provides information on activities and exercise class held by local Age UK representatives. They also signpost to advice on healthy eating options and maintaining a healthy weight especially important if you are being considered for surgery, and some of the options available to get help in the home (<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/homecare/>)

**Versus Arthritis** - <https://www.versusarthritis.org>

Versus Arthritis is an arthritis charity, especially geared towards helping individuals manage differing forms of arthritis. They have useful online exercise programmes especially designed for those with painful arthritic conditions that will help maintain flexibility. They also offer self-help tips for managing arthritic pain.



**NHS Website living with arthritis** - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/living-with>

This website carries useful information for those still at work and dealing with the impact of arthritis and useful links to financial and local government websites that may be able to offer you further support in your home.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

### 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](http://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.

### GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain, inability to weight bear on this limb or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. 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

## Contact Us

To change or cancel your appointment please call:

**For Luton & Dunstable Hospital** – 01582 561385 – Monday to Friday between 08:30 – 17:00. Alternatively visit <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-luton-and-dunstable-university-hospital/>

**For Bedford Hospital –**



To change or cancel your admission date please telephone the contact number on your admission letter between 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday.

For any other queries, please email the below;

**For Bedford Hospital –**

**For Luton and Dunstable Hospital –**