

Neurology: First Outpatient Appointment

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide some routine 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 can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

You don't need to ring your GP, or the hospital caring for you for an update on waiting times because all the information is available on the My Planned Care website.

This guidance has been supported by clinicians who are responsible for your care to support and to help keep you well whilst waiting for your appointment.

Neurology

The Neurology service treat a wide variety of neurological disorders including epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, Motor neurone disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Headache disorders as well as problems of the spine, nerves and muscles. The team consists of consultant neurologists and specialist neurology nurses. The team provide neurological care through an outpatient service as well as an inpatient service through a neurology ward and day unit. The Neurology service is provided from both sites James Cook University Hospital and the Friarage Northallerton. in addition to other hospitals across the region such as Darlington and Hartlepool.

Guidance for Patients

You will be contacted by your trust for you to attend your first appointment, whilst you are waiting please read this leaflet for more information on what you can do to help and support yourself.

How can you support yourself while you await for your appointment?

In the time leading up to your appointment, be sure to take good care of yourself by taking a few smart steps. This can help you avoid complications. By following these simple tips

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

and advice you can ensure you are giving yourself the best possible outcome and help prepare for a successful appointment.

Take Your Medication

Please continue with your normal medications you may however, be advised to stop/change some medications after your appointment. Your clinician or nurse will provide you with this information and advise accordingly.

Please do not stop or change any medications yourself.

Lifestyle

We would encourage anyone suffering from a neurological condition to stop smoking. With help, you're much more likely to quit smoking than if you use willpower alone. Visit [Make Smoking History](#) for free access to the latest aids to help and support you quit, one-to-one advice and also [support in your local area](#)

Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on your body but importantly it can reduce your body's ability to heal. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits or lower to improve your ability to heal.

Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE)

There are natural ways and lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of developing blood clots, these include:

- **Staying active:** make a point of moving every 30-60 minutes to ensure you keep your blood flowing
- **Regular exercise** – simply walking for 30 minutes a day is a great way to keep your circulation moving
- **Maintain a healthy weight**
- **Keep hydrated**

Your doctor will assess your risk of developing a blood clot when you come into hospital and order a treatment plan to minimise your risk. This may include prescribed medications to prevent blood clots.

Keep Moving

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Exercise regularly. Among other benefits, better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. This can allow you to leave hospital and return to your normal quality of life more quickly. Keeping an active lifestyle is good for your health and if you are normally an active person it is important to keep that up before your appointment or procedure. People with low activity levels can improve their fitness levels within as little as 4 weeks.

Good Mental Health

It's important during this time to take care of your mind as well as your body. You might be feeling down, worried or anxious while you are waiting for your surgery.

Here you will find some [general information on mental health issues](#) and some [top tips to improve your mental wellbeing](#).

There are also Apps available to help support your health, mental health and wellbeing:

- Please find tested and approved mental health apps provided by Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust [here](#).
- [Feeling anxious?](#)
- [Feeling stressed?](#)
- [Feeling low?](#)
- [Trouble sleeping?](#)

Other local support services can be found on [the NHS website](#)

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

This information is designed to help you manage your symptoms and stay in the best possible health whilst you wait for your appointment. It is however possible that some of your symptoms may get worse while you are waiting. We recommend you contact your GP practice if symptoms do get worse. Please note your GP does not have access to the hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, however if you feel your condition is getting worse they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.

This information is designed to help you manage your symptoms and stay in the best possible health whilst you wait for your appointment. It is however possible that some of your symptoms may get worse while you are waiting. We recommend you contact your GP practice if symptoms do get worse. Whilst your GP does not have access to the

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, if you feel your condition is getting worse they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it is 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 life threatening Symptoms such as:

- Severe bleeding,
- Breathing difficulties
- Chest pains

Please dial 999.

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also visit www.nhs.uk