

## Gynaecology - Repair of Prolapse

### 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.

### Patient Guidance

Prolapse is very common, Mild prolapse often causes no symptoms and treatment is not always necessary. However, you should see your doctor if you think you may have a prolapse. Prolapse can affect quality of life by causing symptoms such as discomfort or a feeling of heaviness. It can cause bladder and bowel problems, and sexual activity may also be affected.

Prolapse can be reduced with various lifestyle interventions including stopping smoking, weight loss, exercise and avoiding constipation, as well as avoidance of activities that may make your prolapse worse such as heavy lifting.

Treatment options to support your prolapse include physiotherapy, pessaries and surgery.

Version 1: May 2022 The contents of this information has been reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team of Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Chair: Deborah Evans

Chief Executive: Deborah Lee

How severe your symptoms are and whether you choose to have surgery will depend on how your prolapse affects your daily life. Not everyone with prolapse needs surgery but you may want to consider surgery if other options have not adequately helped.

Surgery for prolapse aims to support the pelvic organs and to help ease your symptoms. It cannot always cure the problem completely. There are a number of possible operations; the most suitable one for you will depend on your circumstances.

There are several ways to improve your health while awaiting an appointment. These include

- Avoidance of heavy lifting
- Managing a chronic cough if you have one; stopping smoking will help
- Avoiding constipation; talk to your doctor about ways of helping and treating constipation
- Losing weight if you are overweight
- Avoiding physical activity

Pelvic Floor Exercises may help to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. You may be referred for a course of treatment to a physiotherapist who specialises in prolapse.

Vaginal Hormone Treatment - If you have a mild prolapse and you have gone through the menopause; your doctor may recommend vaginal tablets or cream

## **My Planned Care Patient Information Platform**

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 overrun or they are called away to an emergency.

While you are waiting for your procedure your Gynaecologist may recommend an alternative management or treatment to support your symptoms. It is important that you consider these options.

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

If it's not an emergency please contact the NHS 111 service.

### **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.

### **Additional Support**

For advice and support for a healthier lifestyle please contact Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust [ghc.nhs.uk](http://ghc.nhs.uk) and/or Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire [hlsghos.org](http://hlsghos.org)

### Contact Us

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