

Your Inpatient Experience

How long will I wait for my admission?

- The longest you should wait from being referred by your GP to starting your treatment is 18 weeks.
 - We are working to shorten every stage of your journey from outpatients, diagnostics tests and inpatient or day surgery treatment.
 - In order to do this we need to ensure that all the patients on our waiting list are fit, willing and available to come in for surgery.
 - You can help us to keep waiting times down by ensuring that you contact us if you are unable to keep your admission date.
 - If you do not inform us and fail to arrive for admission, we may return your care to your GP. If your GP considers that you should be seen again he/she will re-refer you.
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How will I know that I am fit for surgery?

- Your GP will have given us some information about your health.
 - We may ask you to complete a health questionnaire.
 - Depending on your planned surgery you may be asked to come for pre-operative assessments.
 - If you are found to have a medical condition which could delay your surgery, your care will be returned to your GP. He/she will re-refer you when you are fit for surgery.
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What do you mean by willing to undergo surgery?

- As part of giving your consent for the operation or procedure, any alternative options should have been fully explained to you, including any risks or benefits.
 - If after discussing this with your family and friends you change your mind about having the surgery or procedure, please let us know as soon as possible.
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What do you mean by available to undergo surgery?

- We appreciate that there will be times when it is inconvenient for you to come in for surgery. However, with reduced waiting times we hope to be in a position to negotiate an admission date that is mutually convenient.
 - Please tell us if you wish to delay your admission, although this will of course affect our ability to treat you within 18 weeks. Please call the Admissions Manager on 01305 253145.
 - Should you no longer require or want your surgery please inform us as soon as possible.
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What should I bring with me?

- Depending on the length of your stay you will need toiletries and nightwear.
- You may also wish to bring a small amount of cash for newspapers etc.
- Please do not bring any expensive jewellery or clothing into the hospital as we are unable to accept responsibility for items not secured in the safe.
- We have the Patientline television, radio and telephone systems at all bedsides. Radio and some television is free. Credit can be purchased from vending machines.

Consenting for treatment

- Health professionals need to gain your consent before they examine or treat you.
 - Sometimes this will be verbal consent, but if you are having an operation you will usually be asked to sign a consent form.
 - Before you consent, be sure that you are aware of the risks, benefits and alternatives.
 - You can withdraw consent at any time.
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Who will know about my admission?

- Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patients.
 - If you would like more details about what information is collected about you and how this information is used please write to Health Records, Dorset County Hospital, Williams Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2JY or e-mail: Health.RecordsAdministrator@dchft.nhs.uk
 - Under the Data Protection Act you are entitled to see information held on your health record. If you wish to do so please write to Health Records (contact details above).
 - Your address is held securely within our database under the Data Protection Act requirements and it will only be used by this organisation. If you do not wish to receive non-clinical correspondence from us please contact us on 01305 254114 or foundation@dchft.nhs.uk or write to Trust Business Manager, Dorset County Hospital, Trust HQ, Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2JY.
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Minimal handling

- In order to protect our staff we operate a policy of minimal handling. This means that as far as possible we will aim to keep you mobile.
 - If during your stay you do need assistance our staff are trained to assess your needs and use the appropriate lifting aids.
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Involving carers, relatives and friends

- We recognise and value the role of patients' carers, relatives and friends and will respect your wishes with regard to their involvement in your care.
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Planning your discharge

- You should start thinking now about your discharge arrangements and any help that you will need after you go home.
 - We will aim to keep your stay in hospital as short as possible.
 - We have a Discharge Lounge where you will be transferred on your day of discharge to await collection. This unit has a designated pick-up area which will be more convenient for someone collecting you by car.
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What if I wish to make a complaint?

- We hope your visit to our hospital is a pleasant experience. If you have any concerns please speak to any member of staff - they should always do their best to respond positively to your needs. You can also contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service advisors on 0800 7838058 or PALS@dchft.nhs.uk
 - Our complaints department can be reached on 01305 254646 or headquarters@dchft.nhs.uk
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Research studies

- This hospital actively contributes to research. You may therefore be approached to discuss the opportunity to participate in a study.