

# Your Outpatient Experience

## How long will I wait for my appointment?

- We are working to shorten every stage of your journey from outpatients, diagnostics tests and inpatient or day surgery treatment.
  - The longest you should wait from being referred by your GP to starting your treatment is 18 weeks. Treatment could be medication, therapy or an operation.
  - You can help us to keep waiting times down by ensuring that you contact us if you are unable to keep an appointment date.
  - On average 7.5% of our patients fail to keep their appointment date. In the past we have automatically rebooked patients but you will appreciate that this makes the waiting time longer for everyone.
  - In future, if you fail to keep appointment dates we will return your care to your GP. If your GP considers that you should be seen again he/she will re-refer you.
  - If you cancel and rebook your appointment more than twice, we may return your care to your GP.
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## Who will know about my appointment?

- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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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## 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 your consent at any time.
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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.

# Top tips



## Before your appointment:

- Write down your two or three most important questions.
- List all your medicines and pills, including vitamins and supplements.
- Write down details of your symptoms, including when they started and what makes them better or worse.
- Ask your hospital or surgery for an interpreter or communication support if needed.
- Ask a friend or family member to come with you if you like.

## After your appointment:

- Write down what you discussed and what happens next. Keep your notes.
- Book any tests that you can and put the dates in your diary.
- **Ask:**
  - what happens if I am not sent my appointment details?
  - when will I receive the results of any tests? (If you don't get the results when you expect, ask for them). Ask what the results mean.

## Before you leave your appointment make sure you know the following:

What might be wrong? You could ask the following questions:

- Can I check that I've understood what you said? What you're saying is ...
- Can you explain it again? I still don't understand.
- Can I have a copy of any letters written about me?

What about any further tests, such as blood tests, scans and so on?

- What are the tests for?
- How and when will I get the results?
- Who do I contact if I don't get the results?

About what treatment, if any, is best for you

- Are there other ways to treat my condition?
- What do you recommend?
- Are there any side effects or risks?
- How long will I need treatment for?
- How will I know if the treatment is working?
- How effective is this treatment?
- What will happen if I don't have any treatment?
- Is there anything I should stop or avoid doing?
- Is there anything else I can do to help myself?



What happens next and who to contact

- What happens next? Do I come back and see you?
- Who do I contact if things get worse?
- Do you have any written information?
- Where can I go for more information, a support group or more help?

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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](mailto:PALS@dchft.nhs.uk)
- Our complaints department can be reached on 01305 254646 or [headquarters@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:headquarters@dchft.nhs.uk)