



Has your Hospital treatment been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

This leaflet provides useful information to support you whilst waiting for an outpatient appointment, diagnostic test, operation, or to see a specialist at hospital.



COVID-19 has placed challenges on our NHS services and we are now delivering care differently to support patients across Scotland

- COVID-19 has resulted in fewer patients being seen and treated across NHS Scotland with some regrettable delays to routine treatment, because of infection control guidance to keep patients and staff safe. During this pandemic patients have been seen and treated based on their clinical urgency and we will continue to do so whilst we remobilise our NHS.
- NHS Scotland is working hard to increase the services available as safely and as quickly as possible. Clinicians/Clinical Experts are continuously reviewing how they deliver services to provide additional appointments to support your care.



About your appointment

- Please make sure that you have provided your GP Practice with up to date contact information, including your preferred method of contact.
- Depending on your individual circumstances, your appointment may not be face-to-face. You may be asked to attend your appointment by taking part in a telephone/video call with a clinician.
- You will usually be notified by letter prior to your appointment. If you are unable to attend your appointment, please let the department or clinic know as soon as possible to enable them to offer this time to another patient. You will be able to reschedule your appointment to a date and time that is suitable for you.
- For your safety, please only attend hospital when asked to.

When should I expect to be seen?

- As soon as your referral is received, it will be reviewed by a clinical team as soon as possible.
- Everything is being done to ensure that you will be seen as soon as possible for your specific condition. Unfortunately this may mean you have to wait longer while services safely restart.
- You may be asked to travel or visit a hospital further from home in order to get your care sooner.

What can you do to help?

- It is important to attend when an appointment is made for you, or let us know if you no longer need to attend.
- Make sure you read any information you are provided with in advance so you know what to expect and can make the relevant preparations.

- We want you to be fully involved in decisions about your care. We would encourage you to ask your healthcare professionals questions to help you make an informed choice about your test and treatment options. We encourage you to ask the **BRAN** questions:

- What are the **B**enefits?
- What are the **R**isks?
- What are the **A**lternatives?
- What if I do **N**othing?

Asking your healthcare professionals these questions will help you decide the tests and treatments that are right for you.

Keeping an eye on your condition

- If you have been referred to a hospital department for an appointment, you should be provided with information on how to manage your condition whilst you wait. This includes contact information should you have any queries.
- Please ensure that you follow the advice on how to support your condition whilst you are waiting to be seen.
- You can find more information through NHS inform self-help guides.

Self Help

- If you require further advice on your condition, please contact the hospital team you are awaiting an appointment with. NHS inform is also a valuable resource – visit nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides
- If your condition or symptoms worsen while waiting, you should contact your GP Practice.
- Your local pharmacist or a trained member of the pharmacy team can give you advice and provide over-the-counter medicine if needed.
- Call **NHS 24** on **111** for further advice on managing symptoms.
- If you consider your condition or symptoms to be life-threatening, then you should call **999** immediately.

Other Support

If you feel that your mental health and wellbeing has been affected by the delay in your treatment, then help is also available from the following organisations;

- If you're feeling overwhelmed or need support you can call **NHS 24** on **111**, 24 hours a day and select the Mental Health option from the telephone prompts.
- **Breathing Space** on **0800 83 85 87** is open weekdays Monday-Thursday, 6pm to 2am, and weekends Friday 6pm to Monday 6am (breathingspace.scot).
- **Living Life** on **0800 328 9655**, open Monday - Friday 1pm to 9pm.

