

Hutchinson Suite:

Chronic Pain Management

Information for patients

This leaflet contains information to help prepare you for your procedure at the Chronic Pain Unit. It also contains information about the working of our service.

It will be a guide in how you will be admitted, and what we will do to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

You will find information on preparing for your procedure and any necessary aftercare.

If you have any further questions please call the Chronic Pain Unit: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 2.00pm.

Planned care office arranges all out-patients and surgery appointments, you can call them on ☎ **01622 228220**

Our Team.

Consultants:

Dr. Fai K. – Sec. Kate Phipps ☎ 01622 224411

Dr. Norman J. – Sec. Pauline O'Connor ☎ 01622 220320

Dr. Griffiths R. – Sec. Pauline O'Connor ☎ 01622 220320

Dr. Wilson J. – Sec. Kate Phipps ☎ 01622 224411

Trust Doctors:

Dr. Engleback M. – Sec. Pauline O'Connor ☎ 01622 220320

Clinical nurse lead and ward manager:

Sister ☎ 01622 220321

Our medical team consist of 4 Consultants with 1 Trust Doctor.

We have 1 clinical nurse specialist, 1 sister and 2 staff nurses. We also have 5 clinical support workers working across sites in both outpatients and the day surgery ward.

Our secretarial team and administrative team provide valuable communication links within the unit.

Planned care office arranges all out-patients and surgery appointments, you can call them on ☎ **01622 228220**.

We work in close collaboration with the Acute Pain Team: Clinical nurse specialist and Sister tel. 01622 224393 at Maidstone Hospital. Clinical nurse specialist and Sister 01892 632690 at the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.

We also lease with the Palliative Care Team on site within MTW and at our local hospice centres – Hospice in the Weald and Heart of Kent Hospice.

In addition we also work closely together with the physiotherapy team in the hospital and in the community.

We are recognised to provide training to anaesthetists at all levels from junior trainees to Pain Fellows looking to become pain specialists. We also regularly provide teaching for affiliated services including nurses and physiotherapists.

What can we do for you.

Our aim is to provide an evidence based service to patients referred to us from their GPs who have experienced pain for 3 months or more. We currently work to the 18 week target from referral date to treatment.

Pain management is achieved by a variety of methods using the multi disciplinary team. Once we have accepted a referral we arrange a consultation with one of our doctors. During this consultation your pain will be assessed and a plan will be discussed for how best to treat your pain using evidence based strategies. We do this by:

- Investigating further, if necessary, using MRI scans, x-ray, blood tests, nerve conduction studies
 - Reviewing your medications
 - Discussing lifestyle changes to help manage your situation
 - Referring you to our Neuropathic Pain Clinic
 - Offering you help to use a TENS machine (a small device using stimulation to inhibit pain)
 - Offering an injection to give short to medium term relief.
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- We offer a range of day case procedures for pain relief, including:
 - Epidurals
 - Facet joint injections
 - Radiofrequency lesioning
 - Root blocks
 - Other nerve blocks
 - Trigger points
 - Neuro modulation (currently limited service)
 - Joint injections
 - Treatments for cancer pain

Whilst we can make a difference to the quality of your life with these methods, evidence strongly and more consistently indicates that people can make a difference to their pain themselves.

We currently do NOT offer:

- Intradiscal Therapy
- Spinal cord stimulation
- Intrathecal pumps
- Psychological therapy except referral to IAPT
- Pain management programmes

Psychological therapy and Pain management programmes are being “highlighted” for future development.

How can you achieve better pain control yourself?

Longstanding pain affects more than 10% of people in the UK. Often there is no cure and sometimes no diagnosis. It can cause anger, frustration, pressure on relationships, loss of employment and commonly depression. It is so important to understand your pain and learn coping strategies.

What can help?

Gentle exercise – often people in pain are nervous about movement, but gentle exercise and building this up gradually will help to strengthen your inner core muscles. These muscles act as a support for your spine thus reducing pain and stiffness. Your flexibility will also be increased and a reduction of weight may improve your mobility. A guide to “exercise and pain” is provided on our website. Or can be provided in written copy by our unit

Goal setting and pacing – often people in pain reduce their activities on bad days and do too much on good days which may increase discomfort and hasten loss of function in the longer term. Setting achievable goals and pacing yourself properly helps you have a sense of accomplishment and success.

Relaxation – pain can lead to tension. Learning to relax your mind and body will reduce this tension and in turn your pain may reduce.

Talking therapies can help. By joining a support group or having a safe person to talk to, especially if they are going through similar experiences, you will begin to perceive and deal with your pain differently. Sharing coping mechanisms and experiences is invaluable.

The British Pain Society has more information about self help groups in your area.

(http://www.britishpainsociety.org/patient_home.htm)

How to find us

We are located on the first floor of Maidstone Hospital.

On arriving in the main reception of the hospital, take the stairs or lift to your left up to the first floor. If you have taken the stairs turn left and we are situated on your left. If you have taken the lift, turn right and we are situated on your right.

Our unit is signposted as Chronic Pain Unit.

Contacts

Chronic Pain Reception: ☎ 01622 224955

Chronic Pain Mobile phone: ☎ 07595 647727

More information on the Chronic Pain website:

www.mtw.nhs.uk/cpu

Out Patient appointment.

To be seen by our services, your GP will have to send us a referral letter. Once we have received this you will be seen at one of our outpatient clinics by a doctor

For this appointment you will need to bring with you a list of all the medication you are actually taking. You will be asked to fill out a Pain Assessment Form before seeing the consultant.

If during your consultation a decision is made to have a procedure done, then you will be put on our waiting list.

A member of staff will explain to you what will happen between now and the day of your procedure.

You will need to undergo an MRSA screening before the procedure. This normally will be done immediately after your outpatient appointment. If this test is found to be positive, you will be informed by letter and instructions will be sent to you regarding treatment and the need for re-screening (which can be done either at your GP or at our unit). We will also inform your GP. A **clear MRSA swab result** is needed to go ahead with the procedure.

[What should I do if I can't attend an appointment?](#)

Please contact the Planned Care Office on ☎ 01622 228220 and let us know as soon as possible if you can't attend an appointment.

We have issues with late cancellations and NON – attending. This increases the waiting time for all. If you cannot attend please call as soon as possible to let us know.

[Do you have any questions about the medicines prescribed for you at OUR hospital?](#)

If so, please call The Medicines Helpline ☎ 01892 634216, 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Preparing for your admission.

We will send you a letter with the date of your procedure and details about where to go when you arrive at the **Maidstone Hospital**. Please arrive for 8am. You will need to telephone the Planned Care Office as stated on your letter, to confirm the procedure date. Some patients will be asked by letter to come in for 10:30am to reduce time spent awaiting the procedure on the day.

Please be sure to organise transport on the day, as you will **not be allowed to drive** for 24hrs after the procedure.

Please be aware that you **can not be on your own** after the procedure for 24hrs. This is to ensure your safety.

Your procedure will be cancelled if you have no one to drive you home and or if there is no one to stay with you over night.

If you take any of the following medications: **Clopidogrel (Plavix), Warfarin (or equivalent), Pradoxal**, please contact the Chronic Pain Unit as soon as possible on **01622 224955 or 07595 647727** for advice on stopping these medications. If you take **Aspirin with a dose higher than 75mg** please contact us as well.

Please let us know if you are or think you may be pregnant. As for most of the procedures we need to use x-ray.

Please let us know if you are currently breastfeeding.

What to bring with you:

- A list of all medication you are actually taking. And bring any medication that you will need during the day.
- Your dentures, spectacles and hearing aid if you usually use these personal items.
- Reading materials

Please do not bring:

- Valuables (e.g. jewellery, large amounts of cash, credit cards) we cannot be responsible for their safety whilst you are in theatre.
- **Avoid** wearing any jewellery, nail varnish or false nails. Wear comfortable easy clothes.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and its staff do not accept any liability for the loss, theft or damage to patient's personal property or money. Please be reminded that you are responsible for any property belonging to you.

What should I do if I can't attend my procedure?

Please contact the Planned Care Office on ☎ 01622 228220 and let us know as soon as possible if you can't attend your procedure.

We have issues with late cancellations and NON – attending. This increases the waiting time for all. If you cannot attend please call as soon as possible to let us know.

Day of admission.

You may eat a **light breakfast** and take your **normal medication** **before 07:30am** on the morning of your injection.

Diabetics MUST have a light breakfast and should take their normal medication **before 07:30am**.

After 7:30hrs you can not drink or eat anything.

Some Patients will be asked by letter to come in for 10:30am, They also need to **fast** from 7:30am.

During your stay on the ward you will be in a single room, in accordance to hospital policy we will allow 1 visitor to stay with you in the room.

Expect to be in the Chronic Pain Unit until about 1.00pm

Arrival at the unit.

Please check in at the reception desk of the Chronic Pain Unit. Staff will direct you to your room or to our admission lounge whilst waiting for your room to be free.

Admission

We will show you to your room.

Our nursing staff will complete a pre-assessment form and pre-operative check list with you before the procedure.

To do this we will need to know what medication your are taking, allergies you may have, medical history, any other relevant information to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

We will prepare you for your procedure and answer any question you may have.

It is very important that we know about any medical conditions you have e.g.:

- allergies
 - previous reactions to medication, drugs
 - diabetes
 - heart conditions
 - asthma
 - COPD
 - sleep apnoea
 - recreational drug use
 - high alcohol intake
 - renal (kidney) failure or impairment
 - epilepsy
 - needle phobias
 - claustrophobia
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You will see a member of your consultant team before the procedure to discuss your treatment and any questions you still may have. You will need to agree and sign a consent form.

You will be asked to get changed and put on one of our surgical gowns.

Prior to the procedure we will insert an intravenous cannula. This is for your own safety.

What are the risks of the procedure / treatment?

As with any surgery, there are associated risks. The most common risks are:

- No immediate pain relief.
 - No pain relief at all.
 - An increase in pain for a few days to a week after the injection, occasionally longer.
 - A minor risk of contracting an infection.
 - After the injection there is a possibility of having numbness or weakness.
 - A headache after an epidural.
 - Diabetics given steroids may notice their blood sugar levels become unstable for up to a fortnight after administration.
 - For more specific risks associated to your procedure, your consultant will happily discuss this with you either in clinic or during the consent process.
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The procedure.

Theatre staff will come to collect you. They will ask you some questions to verify your consent.

During the procedure you lie usually on your side or your stomach. Some procedures require different positions. A local anaesthetic will be used to numb the area being injected. Sometimes you can be given sedation during the procedure. It is usual to use x-ray control during the procedure however we sometimes use ultra-sound.

We will monitor your blood pressure, heart rate, respiration rate and the oxygen levels in your blood during and immediately after the procedure. If needed we will give you oxygen and or other drugs.

Before going back to your room, you will stay for a short period in our recovery room. This is for one to one observations to check for possible side effects or complications.

Once you are back in your room, we will give you some coffee or tea and some biscuits.

If you are uncomfortable or have pain please let us know. If you have any other problem or needs just tell us.

Patients are advised not to try and get up from their trolley after their procedure until assessed by the nurses on the ward.

After 30 minutes we will check on you to see how you are feeling. If you have no side effects and have no numbness and feel fine to get up, we will help you out of bed, so you can go to the toilet and get dressed. Once the nurse has assessed you as safe for discharge you may go home.
Expect to stay **minimum** 1 hour after the procedure.

Your nurse will give you instructions to follow when you go home. All dressings need to be kept clean and dry until the following morning and then can be removed. Wait to take a shower or bath until the next morning.

We advise you **NOT** to drive for 24hrs post procedure. Please be aware that many motor insurance policies are void for the first 24 hours after a procedure.

If you have been given sedation, it is advisable not to drink alcohol for 24 hours as it may affect you adversely.

We recommend two days off from work and thereafter you should resume normal activities within your level of comfort.

What to expect?

Depending which procedure you have done, pain relief is not usually immediate and may take up to a month to be effective. Sometimes an increase in pain may occur for a few days to a week after your injection. Should any of this happen, please take your usual painkillers regularly until this settles down.

Seek medical advice from your GP if your painkillers are not effective.

Diabetics given steroids may notice their blood sugar levels unstable (often raised) for up to a fortnight after administration. We advise that more frequent readings are taken and advice from the diabetic nurse at your surgery be sought if there are any problems.



Follow-up appointments.

It is normal practice for your GP to follow up the effectiveness of your procedure. Your GP can re refer at any time for further consultation if required.

Feed Back.

We would appreciate any feed back from your part concerning your experiences with our service. **Please** use the form that will be given to you on the day of your procedure and drop it in our letterbox that you can find at the entrance of our ward. Your feedback can help us improve the quality of our service.

Further information and advice can also be obtained from:

- The British Pain Society has more information about self help groups in your area:
www.britishpainsociety.org/patient_home.htm
- Arthritis: www.arthritisresearchuk.org
- Fibromyalgia:
www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Fibromyalgia/Pages/Introduction.aspx or helpline ☎ 0844 443 54 22
- Myalgic Encephalopathy: www.meassociation.org.uk

If you need urgent help and cannot contact us, please contact:

**NHS Direct
NHS Direct online**

 **111**
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.


Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

PALS Maidstone Hospital

 01622 224960

PALS Tunbridge Wells

 01892 632953

PALS Email

mtwpals@nhs.net


PALS SMS

 07747 782317

PALS Maidstone Fax

 01622 224843

PALS Tunbridge Wells Fax

 01892 632954

We welcome patient feedback. Please discuss any issues with your Chronic Pain Team.

Issue date: Pending Approval
Database reference:
Created by Johan De Grauwe.

Review date: TBA
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