

Information for people attending the Outpatients Department

This leaflet is intended to answer the most common questions people have when visiting the Outpatients Department. During your time in the Outpatients Department should you have any questions please ask a member of staff.

What should I do if I cannot attend or do not need my appointment?

If you cannot attend your appointment it is important you let us know so we can offer the appointment to the another patient. Your appointment letter will indicate who you need to contact.

Please be aware that, in accordance with Trust policy, if you cancel your appointment more than once or fail to attend an agreed appointment you will automatically be referred back to your GP.

If you booked your appointment through referrals you can cancel your appointment using the following methods:



www.nhs.uk/referrals



Phone: 0845 60 88 88 8 between 7.00am and 10.00pm



Text phone: 0845 8 50 22 50 between 7.00am and 10.00pm

Before your appointment

You may wish to write some notes on your past medical history, such as dates of operations, illnesses, allergies etc. If you have any questions you may wish to write them down; there is space at the back of this leaflet.

You may bring a relative, friend or carer with you; however, space and seating is limited in our outpatient areas and we would appreciate if additional attendees were kept to a minimum.

If you need to discuss your appointment with us please refer to the speciality numbers for Clinical Admission Unit (CAU) teams under the 'Further information and Advice' section, at the end of the leaflet.

Please be aware that your consultant may request tests prior to your outpatient appointment. Please read all the letters you receive from the hospital carefully and ensure that you attend any additional appointments that you may receive.

If you have any additional communication needs please advise staff when you are in contact with the hospital. If you require an interpreter please raise this with staff as early as possible in your care pathway.

Don't forget to bring

- Your appointment letter.
 - **A record of any medicines you may be taking; this is essential.**
 - If you are taking anticoagulants such as warfarin, please bring your record book with recent blood test results.
 - Any specimens as requested in your appointment letter. Please note: if you have been asked to provide a urine specimen you should collect a container from either your GP surgery or from your local pharmacy (other containers, e.g. a jam jar, are not acceptable).
 - Any private x-rays or medical records.
 - Reading glasses to enable you to complete forms.
 - If you are diabetic please bring your records of blood and urine tests and insulin.
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Change in your personal details

When you come in, please let the receptionist know if your personal details or those of your GP have changed or are missing from the information shown on the reverse of your appointment letter.

Automated call reminder / text service

You will receive an automated text message or call to remind you of your appointment. Two automated text messages or calls will be sent. The first of these will be 7 days before your appointment and you will be able to confirm, reorganise or decline your appointment. The second text message/call will be sent 48 hours before your appointment and you will not be able to respond to this.

The hospital will record your main contact number as a mobile telephone unless advised otherwise. You are able to opt out of this service by contacting the hospital using the telephone number in your appointment letter or by informing the receptionist when you come to clinic.

Children in outpatients

If you wish to change or feed your baby in private, please ask the clinic nurse or receptionist who will endeavour to locate an appropriate room or area for you.

When you arrive

If you need help with directions to the appropriate department or waiting area, please ask a member of staff or volunteers allocated at the main entrance.

If you have any additional communication needs, which may affect you during your visit, please advise the clinic receptionist.

What will happen at the clinic

When you come to an outpatients clinic you will be under the care of the consultant named in your letter, but you may not be seen by them personally on every visit. As part of your

consultation it may be necessary for you to attend other departments for further investigations. Please be prepared to wait or come back as required for further appointments.

Patients are seen in order of their appointment times. If you arrive early it is unlikely that you will be seen before your appointment time. As you will appreciate, each patient requires individual attention. We try to keep an overall schedule despite the necessity of seeing additional emergency patients.

If however, you have waited longer than 30 minutes after your appointment time, and no explanation for the delay has been given, please speak to the clinic nurse or receptionist.

Medical teaching

The Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust supports the training of medical students. Patients have the opportunity to help with their learning, both in the inpatient and outpatient areas.

These students may be present during your consultation. Should you have any queries, or would not like students to be present please advise a member of staff in the clinic prior to your consultation.

Chaperone

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust is committed to putting patients at ease whenever possible. There will be occasions when it is routine for a chaperone to be present during a physical examination or consultation, without you needing to ask for one.

However, if you wish to have a chaperone present at any other time please ask a member of Staff within the clinical area.

Departure

Before leaving the department, please report to the receptionist. If you have any queries regarding any future appointments,

admission or discharge from the clinic please ask the receptionist. If you feel you would like further information regarding your medical condition or other health matters, please ask a member of the nursing staff. We may have leaflets or telephone numbers and addresses of self-help groups that you can contact.

Travelling and assistance

- **Expenses:** patients who are receiving certain state benefits may be entitled to reimbursement of public transport fares. You will need to produce proof of your entitlement i.e. benefit book or letter, and your travel tickets. Further information can be found by visiting: www.nhs.uk .
 - **Ambulance transport:** travel by patient transport can only be authorised by your GP for your first visit if you are assessed as medically unfit to travel by public transport, private car or taxi.
 - **Parking:** our car parks operate on a pay station system. On arrival you will receive a ticket at the barrier entrance; this should be retained and paid for at one of the pay stations before you return to your vehicle to leave. Tariffs are prominently displayed at the pay stations. **These charges apply to all vehicles, including disabled badge holders.** Patients or visitors may be taken to or collected from the main entrance at drop off points.
 - **Bus timetables:** can be accessed through local service providers.
 - **Patient assistance:** If you are a carer or escort for a patient and you need help in locating a wheelchair, please ask at the main hospital reception desk. Unfortunately our receptionists and porters are unable to assist patients getting in or out of cars.
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Patient's satisfaction surveys and Friends and Family Test (FFT)

Your feedback is important to us to enable improvement in our services and adequate response to your needs. We might ask you to fill in patient's satisfaction surveys before or after your appointment.

When you complete your appointment, you will often be invited to complete the FFT. After you Outpatient's appointment you will receive a phone call on either your mobile phone or landline phone within suitable periods during the day. FFT is UK government requirement for the NHS to allow patients to give a feedback on the level of care that you received from us.

Smoking

The Trust supports a no smoking policy. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on site but E- cigarettes may be used in designated areas. Patients who would like help giving up smoking can ask clinic staff for our information leaflets which provide hints and advice. You can also be referred to the smoking cessation service, should you wish.

Hand hygiene


In the interests of our patients the Trust is committed to maintaining a clean and safe environment. Hand hygiene is a very important factor in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available throughout our hospitals at the entrance of each clinical area; this is for staff and visitors to clean their hands before and after entering and leaving.

Important information






Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. It is not definitive. We aim to make the information as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that it is always subject to change. You will be provided with information on your specific procedure - always check this for advice.

Further information and advice Section



NHS 111
NHS Choices online

 **111**
www.nhs.uk

To discuss any issues around your appointment, please call directly our specialities, Clinical Admission Unit's teams office (CAU):


-  Specialist Medicine CAU: 01622228219
-  Breast and Surgery CAU: 01622228220
-  Head and Neck CAU: 01622228218
-  Trauma and Orthopaedics CAU: 01622228221
-  Women's and Children CAU: 01622228222

Outpatient's department numbers

-  Main Outpatient's Department at Maidstone Hospital: 01622224297
-  Main Outpatient's Department at Tunbridge Wells Hospital: 01892635760


Maidstone Hospital, Maidstone

 Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

 Telephone: (01622 2) 24960

Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Pembury

 Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

 Telephone: (01892 6) 32953

Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.

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 Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations; we want to hear from you. Please speak with the Department Manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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