

# Waiting for your hospital appointment or surgery

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant some operations and procedures have been postponed. Hospitals in Greater Manchester are starting to resume non-urgent surgery and appointments.

## How long will you wait?

The length of time you have to wait will depend on your specific treatment and clinical needs. It is very hard to tell you exactly how long you will wait because the waiting list changes daily. Your hospital will be in touch to give you an update on your waiting time. If you have access to the internet it is possible to search the average waiting time at your hospital via [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

## How are patients being prioritised?

Our consultants in each service are prioritising people against two key criteria, clinical need and waiting time. This is being done as fairly as possible to ensure that people are not disadvantaged.

## If your condition gets worse...

### and you have received your hospital appointment?

If you already have an appointment date and your condition gets worse you should get in touch with the hospital secretary, booking team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). The contact number to use will be on your last hospital letter.

### or you haven't yet received your hospital appointment?

If your condition is getting worse or you are experiencing new symptoms, you should contact your GP practice. Your GP can assess you and give you some advice. Whilst your GP doesn't have access to the waiting list or appointment system to bring your appointment forward, they can let the hospital know if something has changed that is causing concern. This will then be considered by the hospital team.


## Hospitals working together

Hospitals are working together to treat people as quickly as possible and this includes asking some people to travel to another hospital for their surgery. If you do get contacted about this, please take up the offer if you can. Help with transport can be provided to people who are eligible. In most cases the consultant from your local hospital would still undertake the surgery.

## If you need further support

Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) provide support and advice. You will find a contact number for the hospital on your last letter.

Healthwatch information and signposting services can also support you to make choices about the health and care services you need. Find your local Healthwatch details via [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk).



# Looking after your physical and mental health

There are things you can do to look after your physical and mental wellbeing whilst you are waiting for your appointment or treatment. Maintaining your overall wellbeing will also lead to a faster recovery if you require surgery.



## Healthy weight

Maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your risk of complications during surgery. If your operation isn't urgent and you are overweight, taking time to lose some weight before going ahead will benefit you. Likewise, if you are underweight it would be good to increase your weight. Make simple, small changes. It's not about getting it right – it's about getting started.



## Move more

Try and increase your activity levels. Activities that improve your strength and balance will also be useful for your recovery. Physical activity is good for your body and mind. A daily brisk walk can boost your energy, lift your mood and make everyday activities easier. You can contact your GP practice for advice on what type of exercise is more appropriate for you.



## Quit smoking

This can reduce your chances of complications and speed up your recovery after surgery. It will also make your stay at hospital more comfortable as smoking is not permitted on a hospital's premises.



## Food and nutrition

Your body needs to repair itself after surgery. Eating a healthy diet before and after your surgery can really help.



## Alcohol

Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits, or lower, to improve your body's ability to heal after surgery. Any reduction in the amount you drink every week will be beneficial.



## Mental Health

Waiting for treatment, surgery or tests can be worrying and may also be making you feel anxious or low. It's a good idea to talk about how you are feeling with a friend or family member. If you are really struggling to cope or feel things are getting on top of you, have a chat with your GP or primary care team and they will help you access the support you may need.



## Get vaccinated

Take up all vaccinations that are offered to you. Your surgery may need to be postponed if you get poorly.