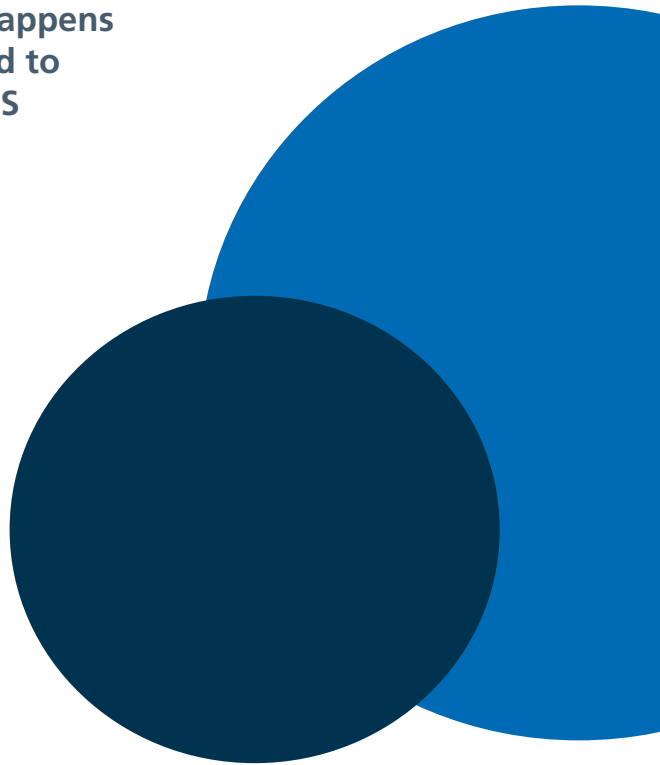


What to expect if you're referred to hospital

Non-emergency

Guidance on what happens
when you're referred to
the West Suffolk NHS
Foundation Trust



If your GP refers you to our hospital for a non-urgent condition, we aim to provide your treatment within 18-weeks. For urgent cases, this time reduces to two weeks.

In order to help us treat you quickly, there are a few things we ask of you:



You need to ensure you are [fit and able to attend appointments](#) within the next 18-weeks. If you have commitments or holidays booked in this time that mean you might not be able to attend, please discuss this with your GP. They may decide to delay the referral until you are free.



Please tell us, and your GP, if you [change your address or phone number](#)



If you're [unable to attend an appointment](#) we've given you, please let us know as soon as possible; if you cancel a number of offered appointments we may refer you back to your GP and you will need to start the 18-week process again.



[Write any questions down](#) you'd like to ask at the appointment, so you don't forget



[Arrive on time](#) for appointments



Let us know if you think [your condition has changed](#) and you no longer need your appointment

Booking an appointment

Your GP may have booked you an appointment themselves and given this to you. If they haven't however, we will [send you a letter](#) asking you to contact us to make an appointment.

We'll try and accommodate you and offer a choice of appointments wherever possible, but please be aware that some clinics only run on certain days and at specific times. We will try and offer you a [choice of two dates](#), with at least [three weeks' notice](#).

Please be aware that if you can't attend any of the appointments we offer you, we may refer you back to your GP and ask that the referral is made at a time when you will be available.



I need to cancel or rearrange my first appointment

If you need to cancel or rearrange an appointment, please just let us know (contact details are at the back of this leaflet).

You're able to cancel or rearrange one appointment with us; if you cancel or rearrange another appointment after this, unfortunately you may be referred back to your GP and you will have to start the 18-week process again.

What happens if I miss my appointments?

Please attend booked appointments, and let us know in advance if you can't. Our appointment spaces are valuable; missing your appointment could delay your or other patients' care.

If you don't attend your appointment without telling us in advance, the hospital consultant will review your referral and either:

- refer you back to your GP; if your GP thinks you still need to be seen by us, you will have to start the 18-week pathway again



- offer you another appointment; please be aware that, if it's your first appointment that you've missed, you will start the 18-week pathway again.

After your first appointment

After a consultant has seen you, they'll make a decision about what should happen next. This could be:

- you need some more tests (which we aim to complete within six weeks). You'll be booked another appointment to see the consultant to discuss the results of these
- the consultant or specialist nurse was able to give you treatment in the clinic during your first appointment, so they don't need to see you again
- you need surgery, and will be added to our surgery waiting list for this to take place
- you don't need any further hospital care, and are referred back to your GP. Where appropriate, you'll be given advice for managing your condition, and/or a prescription.





I have another engagement, e.g. holiday, exams, booked and I want my treatment to be done after that. Is that ok?

You're allowed to postpone or amend your planned treatment, but this might affect your waiting time for the procedure.

If you want to delay your treatment, for any reason, you need to have a conversation with your consultant; together, you'll discuss the clinical risks to delaying your treatment and make an agreed plan for your ongoing care.

What happens if I want to think about the treatment or surgery before agreeing?

The consultant that you see will give you their advice on the best option for your care; it's important that you listen to the consultant and take a decision, together, on the next steps.

If you want some time to think over the options given to you, i.e. whether or not to go forward with surgery, that's absolutely fine.

If you want a few days or weeks to think this over, your consultant will agree a time for you to get in touch to tell us your decision and this shouldn't affect your 18-week treatment pathway. However, if you think you will need a few months to decide, you may be taken down a different route where your 18-week pathway will be stopped while you decide on your options. Your consultant will explain this to you during the discussions they have with you about your care, but if you have any questions please ask them.

If you have a question about your care or planned treatment, you can either contact your consultant's team directly using the details they will provide to you, or you can speak to someone in our telephone appointments centre:

01284 713713

Open 8.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday

There will also be contact details on any letters we send to you about your appointments.

You can find out more about your rights as a patient on the referral to treatment (RTT) 18-week pathway on the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk

 @WestSuffolkNHS
 /WestSuffolkNHS
 www.wsh.nhs.uk

Putting you first