**Your hospital appointment**

**Our outpatient services**



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**A welcome from the chief executive**

Welcome to St. George’s Hospital. We hope to make your hospital experience as pleasant and comfortable as possible. By living out our core values, our staff aim to ensure that all patients feel safe, respected and informed whilst in our care. We promise to listen to you and your needs, and to deliver excellent and timely services with kindness and empathy.

This information leaflet is part of a set of leaflets designed to provide patients with information about our hospitals. The four leaflets that make up this series are:

* General Information booklet
* **Your hospital appointment – Our outpatient services**
* Your hospital stay – Our inpatient services
* Going home – Discharge information for patients

If you would like to read other leaflets from this series please ask a member of staff or visit the patient information pages on our website.

**Introduction**

St George’s outpatient services provide more than 1,000 different clinics to patients not requiring an overnight hospital stay. A doctor or nurse will see patients for assessment, diagnosis, advice or treatment.

The trust has a number of outpatient services which manage appointments on behalf of the majority of departments and services. These are located at the following sites:

* St. George’s Hospital, Blackshaw Road, Tooting London, SW17 0QT
* St. John’s Therapy Centre, St. John’s Hill, Battersea, London, SW11 1SW
* Queen Mary’s Hospital, Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 5PN
* The Nelson Health Centre, Kingston Rd, London SW20 8DB

You will usually receive a letter confirming your outpatient appointment, and this will specify where you need to go.

**Your appointment letter and checks**

Your appointment letter may include details of:

* your hospital and/or NHS number
* your appointment date and time
* the department you are attending and information about where to go on the day
* the hospital site and/or a map
* appointment booking services and the contact information for the department
* your consultant and/or team in charge of your care
* any tests or preparation required for your appointment
* any samples (urine, stool or medicines) you may need to bring with you on the day
* whether you can, or cannot, eat or drink before your appointment
* any other information specific to that appointment.

When you receive your letter please:

* ensure that it contains all the information you require for your outpatient appointment
* check that your details are up to date
* check that you can attend the given appointment
* make a note of your appointment details to ensure you do not forget your outpatient appointment.

If you need to change your appointment or update any details, please contact the appointment booking line on **020 8725 3000**. Alternatively, you can use our online service:

**www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/appointment/outpatients-2/**

**What happens if I cannot or do not attend an appointment?**

Many NHS appointments are wasted each year because patients do not turn up on the day.

**If you** **do not turn up** for your appointment you may put your health at risk. You may also be discharged from our care, meaning that you will need to ask your GP/referrer for a new referral. This means that you will re-join at the end of the waiting list, and that your appointment will be delayed.

**If you** **fall ill** before your appointment (for example, with vomiting or diarrhoea), please let the hospital know. To control the spread of infections you will, in most cases, be asked not to attend and an alternative appointment will be offered.

**If you cannot attend for** **any other reason**, please contact the appointment booking line on **020 8725 3000** between 8am and 6pm, or visit:

**www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/appointment/outpatients-2/**

This will ensure that you are given another appointment and will also allow us to offer your original appointment to someone else who needs it.

**Getting to and from the hospital**

Where possible you should make your own arrangements for attending the outpatient department. For more information on local public transport services, please visit our website:

**www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/contact-and-find-us/find-us/site-and-travel-maps/**

If you think you may require hospital transport you need to contact the Transport Assessment and Booking (TAB) team who will assess your eligibility.

**Tel: 020 8725 0808**

If you have booked hospital transport but need to cancel your outpatient appointment, please ensure you also cancel your transport by contacting the TAB team.

**Cancellations by us**

We always strive to keep every appointment we offer. Unfortunately at times medical emergencies and unplanned circumstances mean that we may have no choice but to cancel an appointment.

We are truly sorry for the inconvenience cancellations may cause and we will do our best to arrange a new appointment as soon as possible.

Unfortunately the hospital cannot reimburse you for any costs incurred as a result of a cancellation.

**How can I get an earlier appointment?**

If you feel your condition has deteriorated and you need an earlier appointment, please discuss your concerns with your GP/referrer. Your condition will be reviewed and, if necessary, you will be referred to other services or your appointment will be rescheduled for an earlier time.

If your condition is stable but you are willing to be seen earlier, you can contact the appointment booking line on **020 8725 3000** and check for cancellations. This may enable you to be seen at short notice.

In some circumstances, however, it may not be possible to reschedule your appointment. This is often the case if, for example, you need to see a specific healthcare professional or if you are waiting for the results of investigations.

**Preparing for your appointment**

You should review your appointment letter a few days before your appointment and ensure that you undertake any preparations outlined in your appointment letter.

You may also wish to prepare a list of questions to ask during your appointment. Our leaflet, **Questions to ask** may help with this.

If this is your first appointment it would be useful to write a list of all your medical conditions, hospitalisations, investigations/tests and any other relevant history to bring with you on the day.

**Checklist: What to bring with you to your appointment:**

* Your appointment letter or NHS number
* A list of all your conditions and relevant medical history
* A list of questions you wish to ask
* A pen and paper to make notes during your consultation
* A list of all your medications (including over-the-counter medications)
* Proof of entitlement to free prescriptions (if applicable)
* Any relevant letters from other healthcare professionals
* Any relevant reports from diagnostics such as scans and x-rays
* Glasses, hearing aids, walking aids, continence aids
* Suitable clothing (for example, loose, comfortable items that are easy to take off/put back on)
* A snack and drink (unless you have been told to avoid food and drink before your appointment)
* Something to read or help pass the time while you wait
* Some loose change
* Money for parking and prescription charges (if applicable)

**On the day of your appointment**

If possible, you should avoid coming to the hospital by car. Parking at the hospital is expensive and outpatient appointments can last up to several hours. There are several buses and an underground station a few minutes away from the hospital.

If you do drive, please ensure you have coins and notes with you to pay for parking. If you need to pay by card you will need to go to the security office at the entrance of Grosvenor Wing for the card payment to be processed (cashpoints are available).

If your appointment lasts more than four hours, the outpatient department can issue you with a form for a discounted daily rate. This form needs to be taken to the security office after your appointment to process your discount. Please ask the staff caring for you for more details.

If you arrive by hospital transport you will be taken directly to the outpatient area and the driver will inform staff at the reception desk that you have arrived.

If you have made your own way to the hospital, please go to the department named in your letter and inform staff on the reception desk of your arrival. Your appointment letter will tell you where you have to go, but please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff for directions if you need them.

Please bring your appointment letter with you, as the receptionist will need to check that all your details are correct. If there are any changes to your personal details please let the receptionist know.

Although we will always try to see you during the time slot allocated for your appointment, other appointments can overrun or the doctor may be called away to an emergency. You should therefore allow plenty of time for your visit, especially if this is your first appointment. Hospital staff will always try to keep you informed of any delays.

**During your consultation**

You will be asked some questions about your health condition and to give details of any previous problems and any medications you take.

If you have several questions to ask, you should write them out in order of importance to ensure the most important questions are definitely covered during the appointment. Some patients find it useful to take notes or to bring someone along to the appointment to help them remember what the health professional has said. You can also ask for information leaflets which support the information you receive verbally.

Please be sure to inform the health professional if you are pregnant, or if you have any allergies or other specific health needs.

**After your consultation**

There are a number of possible outcomes that may result from your consultation:

**You may not need further appointments**

In this case you will be discharged from the department and a letter will be sent to your GP explaining what has happened. A copy of this letter will be sent to you and other health professionals involved in your care.

**You may need more appointments within the same department**

In this case you will receive a follow-up appointment letter with details of when and where to return for your next appointment.

**You may need further appointments with other services or departments**

The health professional that saw you at your outpatient appointment will liaise with other departments and services to organise further appointments as required.

**If you are awaiting test results or details of a follow-up appointment**

The health professional in charge of your care will advise you on when to expect these. If you have not heard from us within the discussed timeframe, please contact the relevant department.

**Medications and prescriptions**

During your appointment you may be given a prescription for a new medication. If the medication is urgent or can only be supplied by the hospital pharmacy, you will need to collect it from St George’s outpatient pharmacy, located in Lanesborough Wing.

You will need to pay for your outpatient prescriptions in the same way that you pay for prescriptions obtained in a high street pharmacy. If you are exempt from payment you will be asked to provide proof of the exemption when handing over your prescription to the pharmacist. You will also be asked to show a list of any medications you are currently taking – this is so that the pharmacist can assess any possible interactions between your current medications and the new medication.

For non-urgent or repeat medication you may be asked to go to your GP in order to pick up your prescription.

**The ‘Friends and Family Test'**

The NHS ‘Friends and Family Test’ (FFT) is an important opportunity for you to provide feedback on the services we provide and to help us improve our standards. At St. George’s, we collect FFT feedback using electronic computer devices (tablets). These can be found mounted on stands or as mobile devices that are handed to you. Completing the questionnaire is quick and simple, as it contains just a couple of questions. We encourage you to take this opportunity to tell us about your experience at St. George’s Hospital.

**Notes**

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk**

**Additional services**

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453

**Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

**NHS Choices**

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** www.nhs.uk

**NHS 111**

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it is not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

 

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