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St George's University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

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# **Digestive Hub Assessment Service**

## **Patient Information Leaflet**

We are working hard to improve our services for patients needing investigation and/or treatment of some stomach and digestive disorders.

We are piloting a new service with several GP practices. This new service is jointly led by consultant gastroenterologists and consultant surgeons and aims to get you a diagnosis faster with fewer visits to the hospital.

Your GP can explain the diagnosis and treatment pathway in more detail or information on the Digestive Hub process this can be found via the St George's patient portal.

You will receive a link to the patient portal when your first appointment is booked.

## **What is the Digestive Hub Assessment Service?**

The Digestive Hub Assessment Service is a single pathway for patients with stomach or digestive hub disorders. Normally patients with these conditions would be referred to see a Gastroenterology or General Surgery consultant. Currently the wait for a Gastroenterology and General Surgery Outpatients appointment is approximately three months. Typically, you would then be sent for tests or referred to another service and this whole process can take up to nine months. We know it is very frustrating so we have designed this new pathway by getting the tests completed sooner with fewer visits to the hospital.

## **Who can attend / receive the service?**

In this pilot phase we have opened the service to several GPs in Merton and Wandsworth. If you are receiving this leaflet, it is because you are a patient of one of these GPs.

Once the pilot is complete (expected three to six months) we plan to expand to all GP practices which St George's serves.

## What happens next?

Your GP will carry out an initial assessment and refer you for some standard investigations to support the clinician to make an informed decision about your care.

Investigations your GP may request include

- Blood tests<sup>1</sup>
- Stool test (Faecal Immunochemical Test)<sup>2</sup>
- Ultrasound scan

A hospital specialist clinician will then review your referral alongside the results of the tests ordered by your GP and decide if further investigations are appropriate, such as

- Endoscopy (camera examination) of the stomach and / or large bowel
- X-ray, ultrasound scan, CT ('CAT') or MRI scan.

## Are there people who cannot participate in this pilot?

All the tests we conduct are very safe and in general they are suitable for most people. However, if you are pregnant or if you have any allergies or mobility issues, please let us know using the contact details provided as some tests may not be appropriate.

## What will happen after all my tests?

A clinician will review your test results. The anticipated time will be within six weeks of your last test being undertaken but maybe sooner. Please note stool test and biopsy results sometimes take longer.

If after reviewing the test results the clinician decides they need to see you for a face to face appointment this will be arranged for you. However, if you do not need to be seen in person, the consultant will write to you and your GP with your test results and next steps. This may include onward referral to a specialist dietician.

If you would still prefer to attend a face to face appointment after receiving a letter containing your results and advice, this can be arranged for you.



## Extra information

<sup>1</sup>Blood tests are taken at one of the local walk-in clinics so no appointment is necessary. They operate on a 'first come, first served' basis. Unless told otherwise by your doctor, there is no need to fast or make any other preparation.

Blood testing is provided at any of the following clinics:

**Queen Mary's Hospital**

Roehampton Lane  
SW15 5PN  
Ground Floor, Suite 2, Blood  
Test room.  
Monday – Friday 8:30am – 5pm  
(Last ticket issued at 4:45pm)

**Nelson Health Centre**

Kingston Road  
SW20 8DA  
Ground Floor, Blood Test room.  
Monday – Friday 8am – 4:30pm  
(Last ticket issued at 3:45pm)  
Saturday 8am – 1:45pm  
(Last ticket issued at 1:30pm)

**St John's Therapy Centre**

162 St John's Hill  
SW11 1SW  
Ground Floor, Entrance B.  
Monday – Thursday 8am – 5pm  
(Last ticket issued at 4:45pm)

**St George's Hospital**

Blackshaw Road  
Tooting  
SW17 0QT  
Clinic A, Lanesborough Wing  
Monday – Friday 7:45am – 4pm  
(Last ticket issued at 3:45pm)

<sup>2</sup>If you have to provide a stool test we will provide you with a stool pot with a label on it. Stool samples can be left with your GP or you can take the stool sample to one of the local blood test clinics. Please note: All samples must be labelled with the date of the sample otherwise they will not be processed.

## Contact us

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback about this service please contact [digestivehub@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:digestivehub@stgeorges.nhs.uk) and a member of the team will get back to you. Please help us by providing a preferred method of contact.

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## 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 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto: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](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's 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

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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