

The Paediatric Breathing Clinic

Information for parents

This leaflet will give you an overview of what to expect if your child is referred to the Breathing Clinic service. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.

What are breathing problems?

Breathing occurs automatically and often without us even noticing. However, many children and young people breathe incorrectly, especially if they have a respiratory disorder such as asthma. Some children develop a habit of breathing too fast, too shallow or breathing through their mouth instead of their nose. This can result in over-breathing or developing an unhelpful breathing pattern.

Unhelpful breathing patterns can also occur from physical or emotional stress which causes the body to breathe inefficiently when it does not need to do so. It can sometimes become difficult to return to a normal breathing pattern without help.

Unhelpful breathing patterns can lead to other problems, including:

- Regularly yawning, feeling the need to take in air or gasping for air
- Tightness, pressure or discomfort in the chest
- Heart palpitations or irregular breathing patterns
- Snoring and / or sleep apnoea
- Feeling more stressed, anxious or worried.

The Paediatric Breathing Clinic

The Breathing Clinic was designed for children and young people whose breathing problems are affecting their ability to perform at their best and participate in usual daily activities. The aim of the clinic is to help children and young people gain better control of their breathing and to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The clinic is run by two members of the Paediatric Respiratory Service at St George's Hospital:

- Clare Chadwick, Principal Paediatric Physiotherapist
- Dr Jansher Bhatti, Paediatric Clinical Psychologist.

How can we help?

The Breathing Clinic can help children and young people to manage their symptoms and to gain better control of their breathing. Sessions may include:

- Assessment of breathing
- Breathing techniques and exercises
- Education on breathing and the influence of emotions, including anxiety and stress
- Strategies to manage stress and worry
- Relaxation strategies and exercises.

Other physiotherapy techniques might include airway clearance techniques, nasal rinsing, advice about posture and how to exercise safely.

What will happen at the first appointment?

Your first appointment will usually last roughly 90 minutes and when you arrive for your appointment, you and your child may be asked to fill in some questionnaires. During the first session we will talk about the current difficulties, as you and your child see them. We also want to know about your family in general and may ask questions about your family's history, your child's early development and about school. This will help us to better understand your child and how we may be able to help.

As well as being asked questions, you and your child can also ask any questions if there is anything about which you are unsure. At the end of the first session, we will try to plan the next steps to help manage the problems. We may also ask your child to practise exercises in between sessions.

How does my child get referred to the Breathing Clinic?

A member of your child's paediatric respiratory team may refer you to the clinic if they think this might support your child. If you would like to speak to us before an appointment is made, you can contact us on paedsbreathingclinic@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Clinic times

The Breathing Clinic is run on Wednesday afternoons between 1.00pm and 5.00pm.

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 advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS 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'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).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: PAE_PBC_03 **Published:** October 2024 **Review date:** October 2026