

Teledermatology Clinic

You have received a teledermatology appointment for review of your skin lesion(s). This leaflet answers common questions about the teledermatology service. If you would like further information or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the person who sees you on the day of the appointment or alternatively the dermatology secretaries on the following number: 020 8725 1792.

What is teledermatology?

Teledermatology is the use of a specialised high quality camera to take photographs of your skin lesion. Your photographs will be reviewed by a member of the dermatology team (a doctor specialising in the study and treatment of skin conditions and lesions). Following the review of the images, a decision will be made about whether any further treatment is required for your lesion or lesions as follows:

- 1) The outcome may be to see you routinely in clinic as the lesion is benign (normal) or to discharge you back to your GP with advice.
- 2) Referral for a skin biopsy for further investigation of the lesion.
- 3) Urgent review in clinic face-to-face with a doctor as it was not possible to make a diagnosis from the photographs.

Who will receive a teledermatology appointment?

Patients who have been seen by their GP following concerns about a skin lesion and

- 1) Aged over 18 and under 70
- 2) A maximum of two lesions of concern to be photographed
- 3) No previous history of a skin cancer
- 4) Normal immune system and not on any medications or have any conditions which lower the immune system.

If you do not fit the above criteria, please contact the dermatology department on 020 8725 1792 for an alternative appointment.

What are the benefits of this service?

- You may come to find out the cause of your skin lesion or have treatment sooner than if you were to wait for a hospital clinic appointment.
- Should you require follow up, you will be directed to the correct clinic appointment, avoiding potential delays in your care.

What happens at my teledermatology appointment?

You will meet with a trained nursing professional within the hospital who will obtain your informed consent and take confidential photographs of your skin problem. The nurses will only be able to photograph the lesion(s) (maximum of two) that have been referred by the GP. They will not be able to comment on any other lesion not referred nor comment on any other skin / dermatological query that you may have.

The photographs will be sent electronically to one of the dermatology doctors at St. George's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust along with the referral letter from your GP. This is done through a secure NHS network / NHS computer software. Your images will be deleted from the camera after submitting the referral although a permanent record will be held on the NHS system for any future hospital visits. You can bring someone with you to your appointment.

What happens after my appointment?

The dermatology doctor will review your photographs and assess whether you need to be seen again in a hospital setting or not. They will be able to decide on the best course of action, in the same way as if you had been seen in the hospital clinic.

The doctor who reviews your photographs will write to you and your GP with the management plan. This will usually be within ten days of the referral.

It is important to note that teledermatology appointments will not offer a full body skin examination which you would be offered if you were seen in a face to face clinic. Therefore, you can only get an opinion on the skin lesions in question, rather than having a full body check, so please bear this in mind. If you would like a full skin check then please ask your GP to refer you routinely for this.

Who provides the service?

This service is delivered by St George's Hospital dermatology department which has been providing dermatology services in Merton and Wandsworth for many years.

Treatment for lesions that are harmless (benign)

If your skin problem is diagnosed as benign, you may not be able to receive treatment for it on the NHS unless specific criteria are met and appropriate funding is approved. Treatment of benign lesions is classified as cosmetic and not available on the NHS.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Q. Does the consultant dermatologist have to see my skin problem in person to identify what is wrong?

A. No. The photographs are high quality and are taken with specialist equipment. However, if the dermatology doctor reviewing your photographs has any uncertainty about the diagnosis, they will ask to see you in a face to face consultation.

Q. Do I need to do anything after my appointment?

A. You and your GP will receive feedback of the outcome of the teledermatology consultation and the need for any further action by letter.

Q. Is this a safe service?

A. Yes, this service is safe. It is already provided in many areas of the country and is an excellent way of helping patients to be seen more quickly than at present without losing any quality in the care received.

For more information about the St George's dermatology service visit our website:
www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/specialist-medicine/dermatology/

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your teledermatology appointment, please contact the dermatology secretaries on the following number: 020 8725 1792.

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.

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

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

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.



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