

Patient information factsheet

Your visit to the ambulatory gynaecology clinic

Two week wait referral

We have given you this factsheet because your GP has referred you to the ambulatory (urgent) gynaecology clinic. We hope that this factsheet answers some of the questions you may have.

Why have I been referred to hospital?

Your GP has referred you to the hospital on an urgent two week wait referral. This means that we will offer you an appointment within two weeks of referral. This is because they have some concerns about some symptoms you have been experiencing, or you had an unusual finding on an ultrasound scan.

These symptoms could be:

- vaginal bleeding after the menopause
- unusual bleeding when you are not expecting it
- a lump or itching on the vulva or vagina
- an area on the cervix (neck of the womb) that looks unusual.

We understand that you may be concerned that this means you have cancer. The majority of patients referred in this way do not have cancer, but may have another non-cancerous condition that we need to treat.

Before your appointment

Women often ask if they can still come to the appointment if they are bleeding or have their period. It is still important to come to the appointment to discuss your symptoms with the doctor. You may need to come back for some tests.

You can come to the appointment alone. However, we do recommend having someone with you just in case you feel unwell and to give you support. This could be a relative, partner or a friend.

Information for carers

If you are a carer or the patient is coming from a nursing home, please contact the department to discuss any special needs.

On the day of your appointment

Please bring a list of any tablets or medication you take. We strongly recommend you bring some sanitary towels in case you have some bleeding. It may help to take some simple pain relief, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, one hour before your appointment. You can eat and drink normally and continue to take any of your regular medication.

There are several doctors, nurses and sonographers who specialise in gynaecology. Please note that there are both male and female members of the team. If you would prefer to see a female team member, please let us know before the appointment, as we cannot always accommodate this request on the day.

Our clinics can be very busy and there is usually more than one clinic running in the department. We will try to let you

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know if the clinic is running late.

What sort of tests or investigations might I have?

During your appointment, the doctor will talk to you about your symptoms and what tests they would like to do. These tests will depend on your symptoms.

We try to make this a 'one-stop clinic'. This means that you may have several tests at one appointment so that you don't have to come in more than once. You may be in the clinic for up to two hours. You may have to come back for another appointment but we will try to avoid this where we can.

Ultrasound scan

This test uses sound waves to show a picture of your pelvic organs. You may need to have two different types of scan. For a transvaginal scan, the probe is placed inside your vagina, and for an abdominal scan, the probe is put on the skin on your abdomen (tummy).

Pelvic or speculum examination

This is an examination of your abdomen and pelvis. The doctor will use their hands to feel your tummy. If the doctor needs to examine your cervix and vagina, they may use an instrument called a speculum to open the vagina, similar to when you have a smear test. These tests may be uncomfortable, but should not be painful.

Hysteroscopy

A hysteroscopy is an examination of the inside of the uterus (womb). The doctor or nurse will pass a narrow camera through the vagina, along the cervix (neck of the womb) into the uterus. They will then pass saline (salty water) through the hysteroscope to get a better view. This may make you feel wet and can cause some abdominal discomfort and cramping. This discomfort should only last a few minutes.

If you find this procedure too uncomfortable, you should let us know and we will stop. We can use local anaesthetic to numb the cervix, if necessary. We may also take a biopsy of the lining of your womb by passing a fine, plastic tube through the cervix.

Vulval biopsy

If you have an area of itchy or sore skin on the vulva (outside lips), we may need to take a small biopsy. We will inject local anaesthetic into the skin to numb the area and remove a small piece of skin. We will then send this to the laboratory so that it can be looked at under a microscope. We will use dissolvable stitches to close the skin.

After your appointment

The waiting time for the results will depend on which tests you have. Sometimes, the doctor or nurse will be able to give you the results on the day.

If we have taken a biopsy, it will go to the laboratory and the results will be available in a few weeks. We usually let you know the results by letter, but we may ask you to return to clinic.

If you need further investigations, or need to come in for a procedure under general anaesthetic, your doctor will discuss this with you in clinic and arrange for you to come back.

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If you have any further queries, please contact us. For any urgent out of hours queries (evenings or weekends), contact the Bramshaw women's unit.

Appointments

Telephone: 023 8120 6016 or 023 8120 6699

Ambulatory gynaecology unit

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm

Telephone: 023 8120 6034

For non-urgent queries, you can leave a message on the answerphone.

Bramshaw women's unit

Telephone: 023 8120 6035

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.