

---

## Having a pre- operative assessment

---

### **Admissions and Pre-assessment Unit**

### **Patient information**



## **Introduction**

Your doctor has recommended that you have an operation. Before your operation, we would like you to attend the Admissions & Pre Assessment Unit (APU) for a pre-operative assessment.

## **Why do I need a pre-operative assessment?**

It is important for you to have a pre-operative assessment to make sure that you are well enough for an anaesthetic and surgery. You will be asked questions about your general health and will have a chance to discuss any concerns or worries you may have. It is important that you understand the procedure you will be having, its risks and benefits, and any possible complications.

Pre-operative assessment also allows time for the APU nurses to plan for your return home after your operation and arrange any extra care or help you may need.

## **When do I have my pre-operative assessment?**

This is usually a minimum of two weeks before your planned admission for your operation. This gives us time to resolve any problems we may come across and reduces the risk of your operation being cancelled at the last minute. If your operation is arranged at short notice, we will still want to see you.

Your pre-operative assessment may take up to two hours, but can be longer and depends on the type of operation or procedure you are having.

## **What happens at my pre-operative assessment?**

A specialist assessment nurse will see you. They will discuss your general health with you, including any medicines you are currently taking, and whether you need any tests before you have a general anaesthetic. You may also be seen by either the doctor or anaesthetist, or both if the nurse feels it is necessary. They will examine you and may listen to your heart and lungs.

Tests you may have include:

- Routine blood tests
- ECG (electrocardiogram or heart trace)  
This is a tool that records the hearts electrical activity.
- Chest x-ray

Other tests, all performed in Chelsea include:

- CPET (Cardio Pulmonary Exercise Test). This is a test that looks at how your heart and lungs react to exercise and involves a 10 minute ride on a stationary bike whilst connected to monitoring equipment.
- Echocardiogram. This is an examination of your heart where the 4 chambers of the heart are examined by ultrasound.

- Lung function. This is a test of your lung capacity which involves breathing into a machine.

These will be arranged for you at a later date before your date of surgery.

Your temperature, blood pressure, pulse rate and blood oxygen levels will be measured. We will also take swabs from your nose to find out if you carry the bacterium known as MRSA (Methicillin -resistant Staphylococcus aureus) which is a type of bacterial infection that is resistant to a number of widely used antibiotics. This means it can be more difficult to treat than other bacterial infections. We do this routinely for all patients admitted to The Royal Marsden. This will tell us whether you will need any treatment for this infection during your stay in hospital. Your operation is not likely to be cancelled, even if you are carrying the bacterium.

## **What if I have any concerns or questions?**

This appointment is also an opportunity to ask questions about your stay in hospital and to share any concerns you may have. You may find it helpful to write down any questions you have and bring them with you.

## **What if I live a long way away?**

If you live a long distance from the hospital and would find it difficult to attend for your pre-operative assessment, please speak to a member of staff. It may be possible to carry out a telephone assessment, however this is not always possible or advisable and depends on your personal circumstances and the operation planned.

## **What should I bring to my pre-operative assessment appointment?**

Please bring a list of your current medicines or a copy of your repeat prescription. This allows the nurse and doctor to see and assess which medicines you are taking.

If you have any recent test results from other hospitals, please bring these with you too.

## **What if I need to change my appointment?**

Please contact the APU Administrator as soon as possible (see contact information on the back of this leaflet) if you need to change your appointment.

Remember to tell staff about special arrangements which may be needed, for example, other hospital appointments for the same day, transport, diet or an interpreter.

## Contact information

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns:

Tel: 020 8661 3379  
020 8661 3380 (Sutton)

Tel: 020 7808 2405  
020 7808 2406 (Chelsea)

The APU is open from 9am until 5pm  
Monday to Friday.

## The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline

020 8915 6899 (available 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week)

Should you require information in an alternative  
format please contact The Royal Marsden Help  
Centre.



The patient information service  
is generously supported by  
The Royal Marsden Charity.

[royalmarsden.org](http://royalmarsden.org)

Registered Charity No.1095197

Revised January 2020. Planned review January 2023  
© The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust SU-1112-09



Radiotherapy and  
Chemotherapy Services  
F538021 & F538022

