

*The* ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

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## Having a pre-operative assessment

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### **Admissions and Pre-Assessment Unit**

### **Patient Information**



**NHS**



## **Introduction**

You are considering having an operation and as part of your preparation we would like you to undergo a pre-operative assessment. This pre-operative assessment usually takes place over the phone and in some cases face to face, in cases of face to face this will be explained to you.

### **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 nurse who specialises in pre-operative assessment will discuss your general health with you, including any medicines you are currently taking, and whether you need any tests before having anaesthesia and surgery. This discussion may take place in person or via telephone. Depending on the type of

operation and other factors, you may also see an anaesthetist, who is a doctor who provides medical care before, during and after your operation.

Tests you may have include:

- Routine blood tests
- ECG (electrocardiogram or heart trace). This is a tool that records the heart's electrical activity.

Other tests, all performed in Chelsea include:

- **CPET (Cardio Pulmonary Exercise Test)**. This is an assessment of the function of your heart, lungs and muscles during exercise. It involves a 10 minute ride on a stationary bicycle whilst connected to monitoring equipment
- **Echocardiogram**. This is an ultrasound examination of the structure and function of your heart
- **Pulmonary function tests**. An assessment of your lung capacity which involves breathing into a machine.

Some tests may 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 bacteria which may require treatment prior to surgery.

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 and we will assist you to make arrangements that minimise your journeys to and from hospital.

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

It is important that we know what medications you are taking, so please bring a list of your current medicines. This allows the nurse and doctor to see and assess which medicines you are taking.

If you have any recent test results or clinic letters 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 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 details

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns:

**Sutton**                    020 8661 3379

**Chelsea**                    020 7811 8202

The APU is open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Alternatively, please call:

**The Royal Marsden Hotline: 020 8915 6899**

You can ring the hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call us straight away if you are feeling unwell or are worried about the side effects of cancer treatments.

This service provides specialist advice and support to all Royal Marsden patients, as well as to their carers, and both hospital and community-based doctors and nurses caring for Royal Marsden patients.

## References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Telephone: Chelsea 020 7811 8438 / 020 7808 2083

Sutton 020 8661 3759 / 3951

Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.

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

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

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