NHS
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Waiting for treatment in the Pain Management Unit – what you need to know

We understand that patients can feel anxious while waiting for treatment. This leaflet aims to answer some common questions and concerns that you may have whilst waiting for treatment in the Royal Berkshire Hospital's Pain Management Unit.

Will you let my GP know about the plan?

After your appointment, we send a report detailing your consultation, our discussion and any agreed plan to your GP with a copy sent to you. We aim to do this within 4 weeks of the appointment.

I don't remember what drugs to take…

We will write to your GP and send a copy to you, detailing any drugs that we prescribe for your pain relief. For some drugs, such as gabapentin or pregabalin, we will provide a schedule that will help you take the medication safely, especially if the dose is likely to change.

How long will I have to wait for the treatment?

We do currently have long waiting times for treatments, particularly if it involves using an X-ray machine. We are working hard to reduce our waiting times. **Please be patient and do not ring the department unless it is urgent.** We will contact you to offer some appointment choices. It may be helpful to let the waiting list team know if there are any time periods that are inconvenient (e.g. holidays or other treatments) so we can try to schedule treatment at a time convenient for you.

Vaccinations

Please note that we do not recommend having a treatment within 2 weeks of having any vaccinations and advise that you wait 2 weeks following your procedure, before receiving any further vaccinations. **If you have COVID or flu vaccinations booked around the time of your procedure, please contact us so we can reschedule this accordingly.**

Will I be asleep for the procedure?

Most treatments are best done under local anaesthetic, which usually means a faster recovery. The pain consultant may also ask questions during the procedure so you should be awake during the procedure. Some patients may require sedation, which involves injecting a mild sedative. This can help make you feel more relaxed, but you will not be asleep.

When are the treatments carried out?

We normally do our X-ray-guided treatments on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and trigger point injections on a Thursday and Friday. Further information about these procedures can be found in the individual patient information leaflets – see *Patient information leaflets list* on https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/services-and-departments/pain-management. All treatments are currently only being done at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Should I take my normal painkillers and other medications before attending?

We advise that you take all of your painkillers and usual medication before coming in for treatment. If you are taking any blood thinners (warfarin, clopidogrel, high dose aspirin – more than 75mg per day – apixaban etc) then these would need to be stopped for a certain number of days before treatment. **If you are on blood thinners, please inform your pain specialist or waiting list officer, who will tell you when to stop your medications.**

Can I come on my own for treatment?

No. Although you can arrive on your own, for your own safety, it is important that a responsible adult is able to accompany you home and stay with you for the next 24 hours. If no one is able to take you home, this may affect whether the procedure can be safely carried out on the day of your appointment. **If you have any problems arranging for a responsible adult to take you home, please inform the waiting list team as soon as possible.**

What happens on the day of the treatment?

All treatments are carried out at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, either in the Pain Management Unit or the Endoscopy Unit (where our pain consultants carry out X-ray-guided procedures). The pain consultants will carry out all treatments.

You will be admitted to the Pain Management Unit on the day of your procedure. A consultant will explain the procedure then ask for your consent for the treatment. Please check with the Admin Team if you are not sure about the location and time of your treatment.

All our patients arrive at the same time for the treatment. Please be aware that the consultant will specify the order of treatments based on clinical grounds on the day of the procedure. If you are coming in for a morning or afternoon session, please be prepared to stay for at least **3-4 hours.** We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause.

For most procedures, you will need to lie on your tummy. You may have to do this for 10-20 minutes. Please tell the doctors and nurses in advance if you have any difficulty in doing this, as the team may be able to put plans in place to help. Some procedures may take longer than 20 minutes and your doctor will advise you if this is likely to be the case. There will be a team of healthcare staff who will be in X-ray room to help the doctor and who can support you during the procedure.

What happens after the treatment?

After the procedure, you will be monitored for 30-minutes to an hour and offered refreshments. Once the team are satisfied with your progress then you can go home, **provided you are accompanied by a responsible adult**.

- You will be given a follow up appointment as appropriate to see the consultant or nurse. This may be a telephone appointment.
- Please be aware that Pain Management Unit closes at 5pm.
- Please carry on taking your usual painkillers.
- Please keep a pain diary, detailing how your pain is over the next few weeks.

For further advice, please refer to our information leaflet '*Advice following treatment in the Pain Management Unit*'.

Any queries?

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your forthcoming treatment, please contact:
During working hours: Pain Management Unit 0118 322 8261 or
email rbb-tr.painclinicadmin@nhs.net.
Out of hours / weekends: please contact your GP or the out of hours' service for advice.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Pain Management Unit
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