

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 while waiting for treatment in the Pain Management Unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Will you let the 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?

Currently it may take up to 4-6 months for patients to get their treatment especially 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 which may be inconvenient (e.g. holidays or other treatments) so we can try and schedule treatment at a convenient time.

Will I be asleep for the procedure?

We do not routinely provide a general anaesthetic for our treatments. Most treatments are best done under local anaesthetic, especially as this usually means a faster recovery for you. Some patients may require sedation, which involves injecting a mild sedative. This

can help make you feel more relaxed and help you during treatment, but you will not be asleep

When do you do your treatments?

We normally do our X-ray guided treatments on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Some treatments can be done during normal clinic times. Further information about these procedures can be found in the patient information sheets. All treatments are currently only being done at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Do I need to fast/starve before the treatment?

If you need sedation then we would advise that you fast for 6 hours prior to coming in for treatment. You can drink water, coffee/tea without milk or weak squash up to 2 hours before treatment.

Should I take my normal painkillers and other medications before coming in?

We advise that you take all your painkillers and usual medication before coming in for treatment. The only exception is diabetics who require sedation and therefore need to fast. We ask this group of patients to skip their morning blood sugar medication though they should still take their painkillers.

If you are taking any blood thinners (warfarin, clopidogrel, high dose aspirin (more than 75mg per day) rivoroxaban etc, then these would need to be stopped for a certain number of days before treatment. Please inform your pain specialist or waiting list officer who will tell you when to stop your blood thinners.

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. 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 clinic or 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 clinic or adult day surgery unit (ADSU) on the day of your procedure. A consultant will then ask for your written consent for the treatment and explain the plan and the procedure. Please check with waiting list officer if you are not sure about the venue and time of your treatment.

Please be aware that the consultant may change the order of the treatments on the day of the procedure based on clinical grounds. 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 if there may be 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 there to help the doctor and support you during the procedure.

What happens after the treatment?

- After the procedure, the nurses will monitor you for 30 minutes to an hour. If the results are satisfactory, 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 your consultant.
- Please carry on taking your usual painkillers.
- Please keep a pain diary, detailing how your pain was over the next few weeks.
- Please refer to our information leaflet '*Advice following treatment in the pain management unit*'.

Any queries?

If you have any concerns regarding this treatment please contact:

During working hours: Pain Management Unit 0118 322 8261

Out of hours/weekends: please contact your GP or the out of hours service for advice.

More information is available on the Trust website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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