

## Pelvic Floor Telephone Clinic

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This leaflet is for patients referred to the Pelvic Floor Service and explains what will happen during the telephone appointments and if you need any tests.

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### **Why have I been referred to the Pelvic Floor Service?**

You have been referred by your doctor as you have been having problems with your bowels. We are aware that bowels are regarded as an embarrassing problem to many of us and we do not like discussing them, even with close family members. However, as a specialist service we are used to this and are here to help and advise you to improve your quality of life. Please try not to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about discussing your problems or asking any questions.

### **What happens now I have been referred?**

When you were referred you should have been asked for a contact telephone number. Along with this information leaflet you should have received a letter confirming the date and time of your telephone appointment. **Please check your letter to find out when to expect our call, so you are able to talk to us in confidence.** If the time and date is not convenient please contact us to rearrange the call.

### **What to expect when we call you**

**During the call we will ask you questions about your general health, any medication you are currently taking, your symptoms and how these are impacting on your quality of life.**

From this appointment you may be referred for tests or sent an appointment for a face to face appointment with one of our team.

### **If I require tests what will they be?**

Some patients may require further tests to give us certain information about how your bowels and pelvic floor are working and to help guide us decide upon a suitable treatment pathway, but you may not require some or any of these tests.

The most common tests are as follows:

- **Anorectal manometry:** measuring the strength and function of your anal (bottom) muscles
- **Endo-anal ultrasound:** to take images (pictures) of the pelvic floor muscles in the anus (bottom)

- Colonoscopy: examination of the bowel with a scope (camera).
- Transit study: an xray to see how your poo travels in the bowel.
- Defecating proctogram: an X-ray of the lower end of the bowel.

## **What questions will I be asked at this telephone appointment?**

Please read the questions below to prepare for your telephone appointment:

### **Your symptoms:**

- What type of bowel symptoms have you been experiencing?
- How long have your symptoms been going on for?
- Are they continuous (constant) or intermittent (now and again)?
- Is there a pattern? e.g. do they occur at the same time every day?

### **Change in your lifestyle:**

- Have you recently changed your diet?
- Have you recently changed your exercise routine?
- Are you stressed?
- Have you been overseas recently?
- Have any of your family, friends or work colleagues has similar symptoms?
- Have you changed or started any new medicines?

### **Your medical history:**

- Have you experienced any bladder or bowel problems in the past?
- Have you had any operations, cardiac (heart) problems, or do you have diabetes?
- What medications are you on, including any 'over the counter' or herbal/alternative supplements? Have any of them changed recently?
- Do you have any allergies?
- Are you under the care of any other doctors or specialists?

### **Family medical history:**

- Do you have any history of bowel cancer or inflammatory disease of the bowel (Crohns or Ulcerative Colitis) – or do any of your family?

### **Social history:**

- Do live on your own?
- Do you have or need any help/support at home?

**Please let us know if you have any questions about our telephone clinic appointment.**

### **What happens after this telephone appointment?**

We will explain at this telephone appointment what will happen next and we will also confirm this in a letter to your GP and send you a copy.

### **What if I don't want any tests?**

Please do not worry, as you can discuss this during your telephone appointment. We can always talk about this face to face when we see you in clinic.

### **What happens after I've had any recommended tests?**

- Your tests will be reviewed by our Pelvic Floor Team.
- Biofeedback treatment (a behavioural therapy) may help with your symptoms. We will book an appointment for assessment for treatment as required.
- If we are not able to find a suitable treatment for you it may be necessary to either organise further tests or refer you to the relevant hospital specialist for assessment.
- We will keep you informed at all times with regard to your progress.

#### **Clinical Admin Team (CAT 3)**

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Anorectal Physiology/GI Physiology, August 2021. Review due: August 2023