

Vasculitis and lupus telephone clinics

What is a telephone clinic?

- Telephone clinics are outpatient appointments conducted by telephone.
- A dedicated time slot on a certain day will be allocated to you, but rather than the appointment taking place in a hospital clinic, it will be done with you over the telephone.

Why have they been set up?

- Outpatient clinics are increasingly full and some patients travel very long distances to attend clinics as part of a specialist service.
- Often the appointment is a routine follow-up to discuss any changes to your long term medical requirements and to discuss interval scans that have been done at your local hospital.
- We have therefore set up a telephone clinic to discuss your ongoing health issues and results without you having to come to the hospital.
- This is designed to be more convenient for you and save you time and travel.

How do these clinics work?

- As with any other clinic, you will be sent your clinic date and time in the post. During your allocated appointment time we ask you to remain close to your telephone and ensure it is not in use.
- The number we ring is entirely your choice, but we recommend suggesting a number where you feel comfortable talking to us.
- We will ring you and ask some security questions to ensure we are speaking with the correct person. Due to patient confidentiality issues we will only be able to hold the consultation directly with you, our patient.

Useful contact details:

Vasculitis nurse specialist: Stella Burns **01223 217259** (answering machine also available if out of office)

What if I need bloods taking or a prescription?

- We will arrange for any blood tests or prescriptions to be undertaken via your GP. If this is not possible we will ask your GP to refer you to your local hospital for blood tests.
- We will ensure we get the results and we will contact you directly if any follow-up is needed.

What if others want to listen to our consultation?

- We will need to hold the initial consultation with you, as you are our patient. However, should you have a speaker phone and wish others to listen in on our consultation that is entirely your choice and decision.
- Some of our patients prefer others to listen in to help remember what has been discussed. We are also happy to repeat what has been said to your next of kin with your express consent should you so wish.

Who do I contact if I have any concerns?

- We always advise you to contact your GP as a first port of call. Your GP will receive a copy of all correspondence, including letters from your telephone consultation so he/she will be fully aware of your current health issues.
- You are always very welcome to contact us for advice and information. Please find a list of useful contact numbers on the next page.

What if I prefer to come to clinic?

- The choice is entirely yours at any time throughout this process. The telephone clinic is offered as an alternative for you to choose which option suits you best.
- If you prefer face to face contact with your specialist nurse or consultant, at any given time, you are very welcome to attend outpatient clinics as before.
- Please ring us to arrange a mutually convenient clinic appointment.

Who has viewed my images/scans?

Most telephone clinics are run by a senior nurse who specialises in your particular field of vasculitis or lupus. He/she will have reviewed your test results together with a consultant before your consultation. Together they will decide when you will need your next scan undertaken. If new concerns are raised through your consultation, the nurse will discuss them with the consultant in order to plan how we best proceed with your care. You will be kept informed of every step throughout your consultation.

Will I always be followed up in this manner?

- Not necessarily. As long as you have no new symptoms or concerns that need action then telephone clinics are ideal. If we wish to see you so that we can undertake a clinical examination we will ask you to come to the clinic.
- In such instances we will arrange for you to attend a hospital outpatient appointment or we may wish to admit you for further tests. These options will always be discussed with you.
- If you wish to change your mind at any time about a telephone clinic appointment, please contact us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS are here to provide help, advice, support and information and to listen to your suggestions and concerns. If you, your relatives or your carers are unhappy with any aspect of your care, or the service you receive while you are attending an outpatient clinic or via the telephone clinic, you or they should speak to a member of the clinic staff as soon as possible. If you feel unable to speak directly to staff, then contact PALS on 01223 216756 or email them at pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk who will be able to assist you.

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