

Rapid access chest pain clinic

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about the rapid access chest pain clinic. It explains what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

You have been referred to the rapid access chest pain clinic. It is located on the ground floor, North Wing of St Thomas' Hospital, in the cardiology outpatients department. We will contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment time. You will be seen within two weeks of being referred to us. If we are unable to contact you by telephone, an appointment will be sent to you in the post.

Why have I been referred?

Your doctor has referred you to the clinic because they think your chest pain may be related to your heart and would like this to be investigated. The aim of the clinic is to provide you with a specialist assessment of your symptoms as quickly as possible.

What will happen at the clinic?

Please go straight to the reception desk in the cardiology outpatients department so we can book you in.

Firstly, you will have a resting electrocardiogram (ECG). This is a test that measures the electrical activity of your heart. Electrodes will be stuck to various locations on your arms, legs and chest. It may be necessary to shave or clip chest hair in order to attach the electrodes. The electrodes are connected by wires to a machine that turns the heart's electrical signals into wavy lines. A paper printout will show the results. The test is painless and only takes a few minutes once the electrodes are attached.

You will then be seen by a nurse who specialises in assessing chest pain. The nurse will look at your ECG results and may give you advice about how to look after your heart and reduce the risk of your symptoms getting worse. You may, with your agreement, be referred to other healthcare professionals who can help you, such as a dietitian or smoking cessation advisor.

The nurse may then decide you need one or more of the following tests:

- An exercise ECG test, which involves walking on a treadmill at increasing speed and gradients while your pulse, blood pressure and heart trace are monitored by a qualified cardiac technician. Remember that this is not a personal fitness test but a means of determining how well your heart functions under stress.
- X-ray and blood tests.
- Echocardiogram-ultrasound which uses high frequency sound waves to produce a more detailed picture of your heart. This involves a wand being placed on several areas of your chest and is not painful.

What happens after I have had the tests?

Before you leave the clinic, the nurse may discuss your results with a specialist cardiac doctor. You will be told the outcome and you may be asked to come back for further tests and another review by the doctor.

If no further discussion with the doctor is necessary, the nurse will tell you the results of your tests and whether you need to come back for any further tests.

A letter will be sent to your GP as soon as possible containing all of the information from your visit. You will also be sent a copy of the letter.

How long will I be in the clinic for?

You will benefit by having all the tests carried out on the same day. This will lead to rapid treatment if you need it or simply put your mind at rest if the results are negative.

Your complete assessment may need you to stay in the department for up to four hours.

How can I prepare for the clinic?

- Please bring a list of your current medications with you to the clinic, as well as details for each medicine, such as the dosage and how often you need to take them.
- You can eat and drink normally before your appointment.
- Please wear loose comfortable clothing with an easily removable top. No high heels or sling back shoes (trainers would be ideal).
- Please arrange transport home (you will be able to use public transport) and bring a packed lunch if required.

Giving my consent (permission)

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

If your tests are normal, you will not need a follow-up appointment and you and your GP will receive your results in a letter.

If you need further tests, we will tell you before you leave the clinic and discuss your test results with you. You will receive details of your next appointment in the post.

Contact us

If you have any further queries before your appointment, please contact us on **020 7188 1012** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). You can also leave a message on the answering machine and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership