

Useful contacts

The Continence Foundation offers advice and assistance from specially trained nurses.
t: 0845 345 0165 (Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 1pm).
e: continence-help@dial.pipex.com
w: www.continence-foundation.org.uk

Incontact provides support and advice and has a network of local groups and helplines.
t: 0870 770 3246
e: info@incontact.org
w: www.incontact.org

Contacting the team

If you have any questions about your appointment please call the unit secretaries on **020 7188 4191/7893**.

For clinical queries, please call:

- Monica Lyons (nurse manager) on 020 7188 4192
- Paula Igualada-Martinez and Gill Houlding (women's health physiotherapists) on 020 7188 4191
- Emma Collins, (colorectal nurse specialist) on 020 7188 7199, extension 52765
- Fiona Hibberts (consultant nurse) on 020 7188 2568

There are three colorectal surgeons in the unit:

- **Mr Andrew Williams**
- **Mr Amir Darakhshan**
- **Mr Alexis Schizas**

To contact them, please call their secretary on **020 7188 2576 /82569/ 82576**.

Further information

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

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS.

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'

t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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

Bowel Function Clinic (including biofeedback)

Advice from the Pelvic Floor Unit

You have been referred to the bowel function clinic. This leaflet offers information about the clinic and how we may be able to help you.

If you have any questions about the clinic or your appointment, please speak to a member of the team – contact details are on pages 5 and 6 of this leaflet.

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What is the bowel function clinic?

This service is provided for patients with functional bowel disorders. At the clinic, we can investigate the cause of your problems and help you to manage or treat them. One of the investigations that may be recommended is biofeedback, which involves inserting a small probe into your anus (back passage). The probe is connected to a monitor, and so allows us to see what your pelvic floor muscles are doing. The procedure is not painful, but you can speak to your specialist nurse or physiotherapist if you have any questions or concerns.

It is often very difficult for patients to talk about their bowel problems, as they find it embarrassing. Please do not feel embarrassed in the bowel function clinic. The nurses and physiotherapists here specialise in bottom and bowel problems and talk about these things every day.

Coming to the clinic

The clinic is part of the Pelvic Floor Unit, which offers investigations to help find out the cause of your bowel problems.

You will be able to eat and drink as normal and take your regular medications before your appointment.

Your appointment letter will give further details about where to go and what you should bring with you.

Who can we help?

We can help patients who have problems with:

- bowel leakage
- constipation
- irritable bowel syndrome
- anal muscle weakness
- anal pain, and
- patients who are unable to open their bowels properly.

What we can do to help you

When you come to the clinic we will explain to you how your digestive system works, and we will also explain any investigations you may have had. We also:

- take a detailed history
- give health education, including advice on diet and fluid intake, exercise and stress management
- give advice on toilet positioning and straining
- teach you how to do anal strengthening and pelvic floor exercises
- provide behavioural therapy
- provide biofeedback
- offer pelvic floor retraining using nerve stimulation
- offer rectal irrigation
- offer support and advice on the use of suppositories and Loperamide.

If you need additional help or advice, we can also refer you to other specialists, such as a dietitian.

Your treatment

The service is led by specialist nurses and physiotherapists, and is carried out over a three to six month period. Patients usually attend the clinic once every four to six weeks.

You will be seen by the same nurse specialist or physiotherapist throughout your treatment. There will be plenty of opportunity to talk about your symptoms and to get advice and support. They may wish to examine you at some point during your treatment, but will let you know if this is necessary and what this will involve.

As you will be seen regularly, we will expect you to carry out the exercises and advice you have been given between your clinic appointments.

The nurses/physiotherapists may ask you to see your GP for a review of any medications that may be affecting your bowel.

What happens when the treatment has been completed?

The nurse specialist/physiotherapist will write to your referring doctor and GP with a detailed report of your progress.

What if my problems return after I have been treated at the clinic?

You can call your nurse specialist or physiotherapist for advice and support even when you are no longer attending the clinic.