

# Minor procedures clinic

Your GP has referred you to the gynaecology outpatient department and you now have an appointment in our minor procedures clinic. This leaflet explains the services the clinic provides and what you can expect during your visit.

The clinic is held in the McNair Centre, ground floor, Southwark Wing, Guy's Hospital.

## Why have I been referred to this clinic?

This is a one-stop clinic for consultation, diagnosis and treatment. You will see either a nurse or doctor who will carry out any necessary investigations to diagnose your problem, explain what could be wrong and offer you advice and/or treatment. All advice and treatment in the clinic is completely confidential.

The clinic sees women regarding:

- abnormal or heavy vaginal bleeding, such as bleeding in between periods, after intercourse or after the menopause
- irregular periods
- cervical polyps (small growths of tissue on the neck of your womb)
- heavy or offensive smelling vaginal discharge
- problems with their vagina/vulva
- problems with IUCDs or coils (a method of contraception).
- assessment for sterilisation.

## Before your appointment?

It is important that you are **not pregnant** when we carry out our investigations. If you are sexually active and of child-bearing age, **you must use contraception from the period before your appointment, otherwise we may not be able to complete your investigations during one appointment.**

**If you think that you will be having your period on the date of your appointment, or you are bleeding on the day, please call one of the nurses below, as this can affect certain procedures.**

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| • Debby Holloway (nurse consultant)         | t: 020 7188 3023 |
| • Anne Teasdale (clinical nurse specialist) | t: 020 7188 7427 |

Enclosed with this leaflet is a questionnaire that you should complete before coming to the clinic, including any medications that you take and a menstrual diary.

You can eat and drink normally before your appointment. For some investigations, we will give you a local anaesthetic. A local anaesthetic uses an injection to numb a part of your body.

You will be awake, but you won't feel any pain. However, you may experience some pain after certain procedures, so we advise you to **take painkillers about an hour before your appointment**.

Some investigations, for example taking a biopsy, can cause bleeding. The bleeding will not be heavy, but will last a few days. It is important not to use tampons for this bleed, so please bring a sanitary pad or panty liner with you.

## What investigations might I have?

You will have a physical examination and may have:

For abnormal vaginal bleeding or irregular periods:

- an ultrasound scan
- blood tests
- a biopsy of the lining of your womb
- a hysteroscopy.

For heavy or offensive smelling discharge:

- swabs taken from the cervix (neck of the womb)
- cauterly (burning) of the cervix under local anaesthetic.

For cysts or vaginal/vulva problems:

- removal of cysts under local anaesthetic.

For problems with IUCD/IUS:

- an ultrasound scan
- an examination
- a hysteroscopy.

**An ultrasound** involves placing a small probe into your vagina, which produces a black and white image of your womb and ovaries on a monitor. This does not hurt.

**A speculum examination** is similar to a smear test. An instrument called a speculum is used to see your cervix. Swabs may also be taken.

**A hysteroscopy** involves passing a telescope-like instrument with a camera on the end through your cervix to look at the inside of your womb. This gives a colour image. Occasionally we may need to give you an injection of local anaesthetic into the cervix, which may sting.

**Biopsies** are small samples of tissue which may be taken from your cervix and the lining of your womb. All biopsies are sent to be examined under a microscope. We will either give you a follow-up appointment, or ask you to telephone us for the results.

**Cauterisation** is where a layer of cells is removed by heat under local anaesthetic.

If you are very anxious about any of these investigations, you may be able to have some of them under a general anaesthetic (where you will be put to sleep) at a later date. We cannot do this during clinic times, but can discuss this with you at your first appointment.

## Going home

Please allow 3–4 hours for your consultation, investigations and treatment, although the time needed will depend on the investigations you have.

We would also suggest that you arrange for someone to help you home and that you take the rest of the day off work.

## Contact us

If you wish to discuss anything before your appointment, please call the gynaecology helpline on **020 7188 3023** on **Wednesday afternoons between 2pm and 4 pm**.

If you need to **change or cancel** your appointment please contact the **outpatient supervisor** on **020 7188 3687** as soon as possible, so that someone else can use the appointment.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://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](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.nhs.uk)

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