

Teledermatology clinic

This leaflet gives information on our teledermatology service and what you can expect when you come to hospital.

Why have you been referred to the teledermatology service?

You have been referred for an assessment of your skin lesion(s). This service will allow you to be assessed more quickly and efficiently, at a time that is convenient to you. Also, if you need to be seen by a consultant in person, we can make sure you are seen in the most appropriate clinic.

We want you to complete a short questionnaire, and come to an appointment at our medical photography department where you will be photographed. These photos and your completed questionnaire will be reviewed by a consultant who can decide on the best treatment for you.

Who is this service suitable for?

This service is suitable if you:

- have 1-3 lesions that need assessment
- can understand the instructions and are able to sign a consent form
- can attend your appointment **before** the time listed in your appointment letter.

This service is **not** suitable if:

- you are under 16 years old
- have more than three lesions that need assessment
- you need a full skin examination
- the lesion(s) that need checking are on your genitals
- another dermatologist has asked us to see you for a second opinion
- you cannot identify the location of the lesion(s) or complete the paperwork
- you have had an organ transplant, or your immune system is suppressed or lowered.

If this clinic is not suitable for you, please contact us to arrange a more appropriate clinic (details at the end of this leaflet).

What should you do and when should you attend?

1 Complete the questionnaire before you arrive

The answers you give form part of your assessment, so please answer them as completely as possible. If you are having difficulty understanding the questions, or how to answer them correctly, you can contact our clinical nurse specialist (CNS) team for advice (details are at the end of this leaflet).

You will also be asked to leave a contact number on the questionnaire. This is so that your doctor can contact you if more information is needed.

You can complete the questionnaire in several ways. You can:

- complete the copy attached to this letter
- download it using this QR code
- download it from our website, [w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/telederm](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/telederm)



You can also complete the questionnaire at your appointment, but you must arrive 15 minutes early to allow time for this.

2 Book an appointment

Your appointment letter will give you a date. We will need you to come to the medical photography department by that date. We will contact you to book an appointment.

We have two sites to choose from, one at Guy's Hospital and one at St Thomas' Hospital. The locations, opening hours, and contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

If after booking an appointment you discover you **cannot attend**, please contact us using the general enquires number (details are at the end of this leaflet).

What should I expect on the day I come to the hospital?

You will see a qualified medical photographer who will review your questionnaire. They may also ask questions to check which lesion you have been referred for. They will have access to your GP referral letter for reference, if necessary.

The photographer will then photograph the lesion(s) on your skin. If you would like a chaperone or same-sex photographer please ask for one when you arrive.

We usually take a number of photographs of each lesion: a wide-shot (to show the location on the body), a close-up (to show some detail), and a microscopic photo through a lens placed on your skin (to show in-depth detail). After all the photographs have been taken, you can leave.

Please note that:

- we will only assess the specific lesion(s) that you were referred for.
- you will not have a face-to-face consultation with a doctor at this appointment.
- if you need a non-urgent full skin check, this can be indicated on the questionnaire and a routine clinic appointment can be offered.

What happens next?

A consultant will give you one of the following outcomes once they have reviewed your GP referral letter, photographs and questionnaire:

- Reassurance that there is nothing wrong, and you will be discharged from the clinic.
- A clinic appointment to see a skin cancer nurse to check the lesion (who may suggest a biopsy (skin sample) or removing it). Consent for any surgery will be taken on the day.
- An urgent clinic appointment with a dermatology doctor.
- A routine follow-up appointment (usually within three months).

We will contact you to tell you of the outcome by letter and/or email. You should be contacted within two weeks of your visit. When organising urgent appointments, we will often try to contact you by phone as well. If you have not heard from us after two weeks, please contact us, [t: 020 7188 6423](tel:02071886423).

Why would you be asked to return to a clinic?

There are a number of reasons we might invite you back to the clinic.

- If there is any uncertainty around the diagnosis, or if more information is needed.
- If we would like to organise a biopsy or removal of the skin lesion.
- If you have requested a full skin check on your questionnaire.
- If you have requested a clinic appointment.

Your appointment may be arranged urgently if we were unable to assess your case accurately or if you might need further treatment.

Is teledermatology safe?

Yes. The same outcomes happen if patients are seen in person or assessed by high quality photographs. The questionnaire we ask you to complete gives the consultant extra information to help with the diagnosis. If anything is unclear you will be offered a face-to-face clinic appointment.

The teledermatology service is more convenient and allows you to be assessed sooner than having to wait for a face-to-face clinic.

One problem that the service has is that it cannot perform a full skin check. If you feel that you need one, please tell us and we will arrange for you to be seen in person instead.

Will your photographs be stored safely?

Yes. All your data will be kept safely in accordance with existing NHS regulations. When your photographs are taken, you will be asked if you would like your photographs used only for your medical records, or if you consent for them to be used for medical teaching. Whichever answer you give will not affect the treatment you receive.

If you have any more questions, please speak to your GP or contact our CNS team using the number given in your appointment letter.

Contact us

Medical photography departments

Guy's Hospital: 1st floor, Bermondsey Wing,

t: 020 7188 3764, Monday to Friday, 9am-1pm and 2-5pm

St Thomas' Hospital: Block C, 1st floor, South Wing

t: 020 7188 5074, Monday to Friday, 9am-1pm and 2-5pm

General queries

If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment, please contact the skin cancer screening secretary, **t:** 020 7188 6423, Monday to Friday, 7.30am-5.30pm,

e: gst-tr.skincancerreferrals@nhs.net

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

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A list of sources is available on request