

Your first pain management appointment

Contents

- p.2** Contents
- p.3** Introduction
- p.3** What can I expect from the pain management team?
- p.3** Meet the pain management team
- p.4** Where is the department?
- p.6** What happens at your appointment?
- p.6** Five key tips to a successful appointment
- p.7** Potential treatment options
- p.9** What happens after your first appointment?
- p.10** Contacting the pain department
- p.11** Questions you may want to ask
- p.12** Contacting other hospital services

Introduction

Welcome to the pain management service at Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. We have received your referral and look forward to see you. This leaflet gives you an overview of our service.

What can I expect from the pain management team?

Chronic pain is an individual experience and people react to living with it in different ways. People with chronic pain often have difficulties carrying out daily activities, including work and exercise. This can be very distressing and people can often feel low and anxious as a result. The pain management team aims to help you manage the challenges of living with chronic pain.

Meet the pain management team

Our team is made up of several different professionals:

- Consultants - specialist pain management doctors who take the overall responsibility for your care and treatment plan.
- Clinical fellows - experienced doctors who are training to become pain management consultants.
- Clinic nurses - experienced nurses who specialise in assessment and treatment of chronic pain patients.
- Psychologists - doctors who specialise in the psychological and social aspects of pain management.

- Physiotherapists - qualified healthcare professionals who specialise in movement and the impact of chronic pain.
- Occupational therapists - qualified healthcare professional who specialise in functionality and maximising activities of daily living.
- Administrative staff - the team responsible for booking appointments, writing letters and organising the service.

Some or all of our team may be involved in your care, depending on your personal needs.

Where is the department?

The pain management outpatients department is located at St Thomas' Hospital. The department is on the ground floor of the Gassiot House building towards the Westminster Bridge entrance of the hospital (see map on the next page).

Our Address

Pain Management and Neuromodulation
Ground Floor
Gassiot House
St Thomas' Hospital
Westminster Bridge Road
London
SE1 7EH

St Thomas' Hospital

Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH

Guy's and St Thomas' **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 020 7188 7188



Key

- Site Entrance
- Building Entrances
- Pedestrian Access
- Disabled Access
- Main Corridors
- Information
- Lifts - A, B, C, D, E, F, H, J, K
- Stairs
- Cafe
- Restaurant
- Shops
- Toilets
- Cash Point
- Network Rail
- Underground
- Buses
- Bus Stops
- Pick up/Drop off
- Disabled Parking
- Visitor Parking
- Bicycle Racks
- Post Box
- Outpatient Pharmacy

What happens at your appointment?

At your first outpatient appointment you will have a full assessment with a doctor from the pain management team. These appointments normally last **approximately 30 minutes** and will look at the origin and development of your pain, any investigations and treatment carried out so far and the levels of your pain. Assessment will also be made of the effect pain is having on your daily activities, work, sleep, mood and emotional well being, which may mean asking you questions of a personal nature. It is important to tell the consultant about any medical conditions you have, as they could be contributing to your pain.

Some appointments may include a full physical examination and further investigations, such as scans, which will be arranged before a treatment plan is discussed and agreed.

Five key tips to a successful appointment

To ensure you receive a comprehensive assessment we kindly ask that you do the following.

- Please ensure you arrive in good time for your appointment, we cannot guarantee that you will be seen if you do not arrive on time.
- Bring either your medication to the appointment, OR a list of medication you are currently taking.
- If you have any scans, reports or letters from other hospitals that are relevant to your current pain please ensure you bring them with you.

- If you need an interpreter please let the department know at least two weeks before your appointment so this can be arranged.
- When you arrive it is likely that you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your pain. Please let us know immediately on the day of your appointment if you need help with this..

Potential treatment options

Should your clinical team feel that you are suitable for ongoing treatment there are a number of different treatment options or plans which may be discussed with you at your appointment. These include but are not limited to:

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)

This is a small, patient controlled electrical device that delivers electrical impulses across the skin and can be an effective way to relieve chronic pain. It delivers a comfortable continuous tingling or gentle pulsating sensation. Full instruction on the use of TENS is given by trained staff.

Interventional procedures

Interventional procedures that might be recommended to you include:

- different types of injections (such as nerve blocks)
- epidurals (an injection of painkiller into your back)
- alternative procedures which will be explained if deemed appropriate following your assessment.

For more information on these please ask your consultant.

Non-interventional procedures

Psychology - This aims to improve how you cope with your pain and the various ways it may be affecting your life.

Physiotherapy – A specialist physiotherapist will normally assess you and develop an individual exercise plan.

Self management techniques

Pain management programme - This four week residential programme is for patients who continue to be in chronic pain. It helps patients learn physical and psychological coping mechanisms to improve the quality of their life.

It takes place on the St Thomas' Hospital site, and the assessment process for this will be separate to your Pain Management Centre appointment.

Outcomes generally include a better quality of life with increased levels of fitness and physical function, less reliance on medication and aids, improvement in mood and relationships, and movement towards a patient's valued goals.

Medication

There are a number of different medications which we might suggest you use, including common medicines such as paracetamol or anti-inflammatory drugs. Some patients may be helped by medications that are normally used for other conditions such as depression or epilepsy, which reduce pain by changing the way the nervous system handles the pain message.

What happens after your first appointment?

This will depend on your treatment plan.

If you have been booked for a treatment you will be contacted by our admissions team and offered a date to attend Day Surgery for the procedure.

If you have been recommended for more complex procedures you will be referred on to the relevant assessment teams in our department.

If you have been sent for investigations, or started on new medication, you will receive a follow up appointment – either in the clinic or a telephone consultation with one of our specialist nurses.

If you are not suitable for treatment at Guy's and St Thomas' you may be discharged back to your referrer, or referred on to the appropriate team.

Contacting the Pain Department

Contact details

If you have questions about your Pain Management appointment please contact **0207 188 8877** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Useful websites about our pain service:

- www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/pain
- www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/input

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

Any questions you want to ask us:

My expectations from this appointment are....

Possible side effects of treatment...

Other issues I would like to discuss....

Contacting other hospital services

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. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

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

Language support services – If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815

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

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