What should I do whilst waiting for Triage?

While you are waiting to come it helps to:
- Keep active
- Use pain killers if you need them
- Keep working
- Expect the pain to improve with time.

What should I bring with me?

- your appointment letter.
- a list of your medication.
- a list of any questions you want to ask.

What should I wear?

In order to examine you, you will be asked to remove some of your clothes. Therefore, it is best to wear clothes and footwear that you can remove easily.

For example to examine your lower back, it is likely that we will ask you to remove your trousers, socks and shoes.

Useful reading

For back pain
- The Back Book ISBN 0-11-702949-1

For pain that is limiting your activity

For whiplash

If you take these details to any large bookshop they will be able to get the book for you.

Can I get an earlier appointment?

The date of your appointment will reflect the current waiting list for triage. It is hospital policy for patients to be seen in turn.

Spinal Triage Team

Appointments: 01865 738053

Secretary: Denise Drackett
01865 738054

Physiotherapists: Elaine Buchanan
Louise Hailey

Spinal Surgeons: Mr Bowden
Mr Fairbank
Mr Wilson-MacDonald

Spinal Triage Appointments Version 1
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Elaine Buchanan May 2005
What is Triage?

At the NOC people referred with spinal pain are assessed in Spinal Triage to co-ordinate what help the person needs.

The visit

When you arrive, please report to the outpatients reception desk.

The receptionist will give you some forms to fill in. A nurse will be happy to assist if you wish.

Following this the nurse will measure your height and weight.

You will then have a discussion and examination with the Triage physiotherapist.

A letter about your visit will be sent to your GP. This will include a diagnosis and outline any further treatment recommended or arranged. A copy of this will be sent to you.

What help will I be offered?

After the consultation we will understand lots about your problems and the impact that they are having on your life. Together you and the physiotherapist will consider the options below and decide on the best way forward.

Options may be to:

- give advice and reassurance
- arrange for physiotherapy
- arrange rehabilitation
- arrange a medication review
- explore surgical options

What is a Triage Physiotherapist?

Triage physiotherapists are highly trained and specialise in assessing people with spinal pain. The spinal surgeons and physiotherapists meet weekly to discuss patients who may need an operation.

Why use forms?

You will be asked to fill in some forms. The information from these is used in your consultation. The information helps with

- the diagnosis
- treatment planning
- predicting what will happen long term

At times, we use the information from the forms to monitor and develop the service. All information collected will remain confidential.

Will I have a scan?

Most people who come to Triage do not need a scan.

Scans are very good at showing us the parts in your body, but do not show pain, or help with most diagnoses. It is now known that painfree people frequently have ageing changes in their spine. Similarly people with spinal pain often have normal scans

Indications for a scan are when:

- an operation is being considered
- the person is also unwell.

If a scan is indicated you will be referred for this, but it will not happen on the same day.

How long will my appointment take?

You will be in the hospital for approximately 2 hours.

We try to run to time, but occasionally clinic runs late due to unforeseen circumstances. The nurse will keep you informed.

Can I bring someone with me?

We are very happy for you to bring someone with you. Some people find that it helps them to remember what was said.

Do you need an interpreter?

The hospital has an interpreter service available. Contact the appointments office to arrange this.

What should I do if I don’t think I need to come to hospital?

Spinal pain often improves with time. If this happens and you no longer need to come, then we would appreciate if you cancel your appointment. Doing so will help other patients who are on the waiting list get here a bit quicker.

What should I do if my pain is getting worse before my appointment?

Unfortunately spinal pain goes through good and bad spells. If you are concerned about your pain then you should see your GP and together review the situation and the effectiveness of your medication.