

**Patient
Information**

Rapid Access Skin Assessment Clinic

Introduction

You have been referred to the Rapid Access Skin Assessment Clinic for us to look at or treat a skin lesion. A skin lesion is a part of the skin that has an abnormal growth or appearance compared to the skin around it. Our priority is to confirm or rule out a diagnosis of skin cancer. This leaflet gives you information about the clinic and how it runs.

About the Rapid Access Skin Assessment Clinic

The clinic aims to quickly give a diagnosis and treatment to patients with new or changing lesions that may be skin cancer. The clinic has a team of health care professionals including dermatologists (skin specialists), dermatologic surgeons (skin specialists trained in skin surgery) and cancer nurse specialists. There is also a team of outpatient nurses who are here to help you during your clinic visits.

Please feel free to ask us any questions you may have about your skin and why you have been referred to the clinic.

How do I get an appointment in the clinic?

You can only be referred to the clinic by your GP. Patients without an appointment cannot be seen.

If you are concerned about a skin lesion, report it to your GP straight away. Your GP will assess you and if they have any concerns they can refer to a specialist clinic.

How long will I wait to get an appointment?

We aim to provide quick access to our clinic for patients with suspected skin cancer by seeing all urgent GP referrals within 2 weeks. We try to match the number of doctors in clinic to the number of patients attending clinic to keep any delays as short as possible. As it is our aim to see all the urgent referrals within 2 weeks, our clinics are sometimes very busy. We are sorry if you face any delays in getting an appointment, we will do our best to see you as soon as possible.

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What will happen in the clinic?

When the doctor is ready to see you a nurse will ask you to go in to the consulting room. Patients are usually referred because there is a concern about a single lesion, but as part of our screening we offer all our patients a full skin check. If you would like full skin check the doctor or nurse will ask you to undress so the doctor can examine all of your skin. If you would rather not have a full skin check, or if you would like another member of staff to be present, please let the doctor know.

How will you make a diagnosis?

Sometimes we make a diagnosis by examining your skin, but often we need to take a sample (skin biopsy) to make an accurate diagnosis. A skin biopsy is carried out under local anaesthetic and often needs stitches. If the doctor seeing you thinks that you need a biopsy to help with diagnosis, or skin surgery to treat a lesion, we aim to offer this procedure on the same date as your appointment, if it is agreeable with you. Occasionally we cannot offer an appointment for surgery on the same day, so we will offer you an appointment to have your procedure at the earliest available date.

How long will I wait to be seen in the clinic?

We like to offer any biopsies and treatment on the same day because it means that you do not have to come back to the hospital at a later date. The demand for the clinic and for the biopsies is higher on certain days than others, which can mean there is a wait to see a doctor, or for biopsy. We will try to see you as quickly as possible and are sorry if there are any delays. If you need to have a biopsy, but feel you cannot wait, please tell the doctor seeing you and they will arrange for it to be done another day.

What lesions need a biopsy or treatment?

We take a biopsy of any lesion where it is not possible to make a clinical diagnosis by only examining your skin. We treat all skin cancers and pre-cancerous lesions. We cannot treat benign (non-cancerous) skin lesions.

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We aim to diagnose and treat patients on the day of their first appointment, where possible. The majority of our patients are not given follow-up appointments. If you have had skin cancer surgery, we are likely to contact you at a later date to offer a follow-up appointment. It is important that you leave us with your day time telephone number as we may need to contact you at short notice to offer a follow-up appointment.

I have had a surgical procedure – what happens next?

The result of your biopsy will come back to your hospital doctor, who will then decide what follow-up is required. You will be sent a letter to let you know when we would like you to come back. This will normally be 2 to 4 weeks after your first procedure. Please try to attend any follow-up appointment offered as our slots are always in demand. If you are unable to keep the appointment please ring the Booking Office to arrange your appointment for another time. The contact number will be on your appointment letter.

Can I get my result by telephone?

We do not usually give results over the telephone. If you are offered an appointment by telephone please do not ask the caller about your biopsy result. The person calling will be an administrator who has been asked to book your appointment by a doctor. The caller will not have been told the result or why you need to come back for follow-up.

I have been offered a follow-up appointment – what does that mean?

Do not be concerned if you are offered a follow-up appointment. Many patients who have had skin surgery are offered follow-up appointments. This may be because the doctor wishes to discuss the results with you, or to look at your skin again, would like to arrange more tests or to offer you treatment. We try not to offer appointments that are not needed. If you are offered an appointment it is because the doctor feels it is important to see you again.

**Patient
Information****What do I do if I have not been contacted about my follow-up?**

Usually, all our patients will have been told about follow-up plans within 4 weeks of their procedure.

If you have not heard anything after 4 weeks please contact your consultant's secretary at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

Contact information

Booking Office

Tel: 0300 422 5620

Tel: 0300 422 5329

If you have any worries or concerns following your clinic appointment, please contact your consultant's secretary. The secretary's phone number will be at the top of your clinic letter, which will be posted to you following your appointment.

Alternately you can contact:

Gloucestershire Hospitals Switchboard

Tel: 0300 422 2222

When prompted ask for the operator then for your consultant's secretary.

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