

Elective care covers a broad range of planned, non-emergency services, from diagnostic tests and scans to outpatient appointments, surgery and cancer treatment.

1 Awareness

You may become aware of your symptoms, or they may be identified via screening/targeted health checks.

What can you do:

- Visit NHS webpage for advice on many symptoms.
- You can contact your general practice via the surgery website, by phone or in person. Many practices use a digital or care navigation system to make sure you see the right person, which might not be a GP.

2 General practice

What to expect:

- A review will be with one of the general practice team they will listen to you, ask questions and use clinical record and examination findings to understand your symptoms as needed.
- Many concerns and conditions can be managed in general practice with advice, medication and investigations.
- Appointment may be in person, online or by telephone as appropriate.

What can you do:

- Ask questions and share information you have about your symptoms to help your care provider understand the full picture and make a suitable plan with you.

3 If you are referred to the hospital

What to expect:

- General practice may seek specialist advice about your symptoms through advice and guidance (A&G). This may allow treatment to continue with general practice or a referral to the hospital may be made.

What can you do:

- Make sure your contact details are up to date with your general practice surgery.
- Be prepared for your care to continue within general practice if advice is offered.
- You can choose the organisation you are referred to for your first appointment with a consultant but discuss this with your referrer as there are considerations which may affect decisions.
- If you wait longer than the maximum waiting time specified for your treatment you can ask to move to a different provider.

4 If you require hospital care

What to expect:

- You will be sent an appointment letter with at least 3 weeks' notice for your first appointment unless it is urgent or the appointment is sooner than 3 weeks, when you may receive a phone call.
- Your appointment could be via the telephone, in person or you may have a diagnostic test first.
- If the hospital reschedules your appointment, a new date will be booked as soon as possible.

What can you do:

- If your symptoms change or have any questions whilst awaiting your initial appointment, please contact your general practice surgery.
- Attend your appointments and make contact if you are unable to do so.
- If you do not attend your appointment, you may not be offered another one, this will be decided by your clinician.
- Follow any pre-appointment steps you may have been sent.
- With your clinician, share information and ask questions about your symptoms and what matters to you.
- Make sure you are clear on any of the advice given so you that you can continue it at home.

5 At the end of your hospital journey

What to expect:

- A letter is sent to you and your general practice with information about diagnosis, treatment plan and next steps.
- If you are on active monitoring, you will be provided with written contact details.
- You may be given a patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) which means it is up to you to arrange any follow-up based on your symptoms.

What can you do:

- Ensure you continue the advice/treatment as directed unless you have side-effects.
- Use the active monitoring or PIFU contacts provided, in the event your condition or circumstances change.

