

Remote Consultations and Help Online

Our Specialist Paget's Nurse, Diana Wilkinson, has been looking at the NHS services that are available online, how patients are increasingly interacting remotely, and she provides guidance on remote consultations.

NHS Help Online

It is important to remember that NHS help is still available, and you should not avoid seeking it. From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were all asked to use online services as much as possible to help the NHS cope with demand. It can be easy to get NHS help using your smartphone, tablet or computer if you have one.

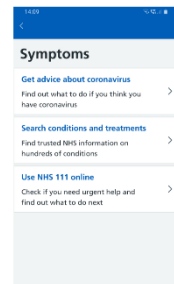
The NHS website includes advice on how to:

- order repeat prescriptions
- contact your GP
- find out about urgent dental treatment
- manage long-term conditions
- maintain your mental and physical wellbeing
- how to get the most out of a remote consultation

NHS App

The services available via the NHS app are growing. The app may be used for many things including to search trusted NHS information, make appointments and order repeat prescriptions.

Visit www.nhs.uk



Contacting Your GP

To contact your GP, you can use your GP surgery's website, the NHS app or telephone them.

Remote Consultations - Guidance for Patients

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that many healthcare professionals, such as consultants, GPs and specialist nurses, had to change the way they interact with patients. Remote telephone and video consultations, instead of face-to-face appointments, have been in use for some years; however, their use has greatly increased since the pandemic was declared. Not all healthcare professionals or patients have access to the same technology, so experiences are likely to vary.

The advantages of consultations by telephone or video are that they:

- prevent the transmission of the disease
- allow healthcare professionals to speak to patients who are unable to travel (e.g. due to self-isolation)
- support providers to meet increased demand in a particular locality
- allow healthcare professionals to work from home (e.g. due to self-isolation)

Can Anyone Have a Remote Consultation?

Remote consultations are not for everyone; however, they can be used for a wide range of patients and appointment types. In general, they are suitable for people who do not need a physical examination or test and who can communicate via telephone or video. If there is a benefit to seeing the patient, then a video rather than a telephone consultation is preferred when possible. Depending on the outcome of your remote appointment, you may need to go to your health centre or hospital for a face-to-face appointment.

Your Remote Consultation

Before the appointment:

- Your healthcare provider will decide which type of appointment (phone, video or face-to-face) to offer you.
- They should contact you to confirm the appointment and ensure you have the required technology. Do not worry if you do not have this, a telephone call will always be available.
- If you are offered a video appointment, you will receive a link with instructions on how to join the appointment, there will also be details on how to check in advance that your device is set-up correctly.
- If you do not want to use video, you have a right to say no. Ensure you know how to turn the video off.
- Work out what questions you want to ask and make a note of them.
- Prepare a list of your recent medication, any changes to medication and dosages, as well as any over-the-counter medicines you are taking.
- Ask a family member to be with you if you would like this.
- Make sure the device you are using is fully charged.
- Try and be somewhere with stable internet or mobile connection.
- The appointment may not take place at the exact time so ensure you are available either side of your appointment time
- Find somewhere quiet where you can talk freely and hear clearly

During the appointment

- Make sure you will not be disturbed.
- Remember that technology may fail. Make sure you know how to reconnect if you get cut off.
- Ask any questions that you need to.
- If you are being prescribed medication, find out how to collect your prescription.
- Ask if you need a follow-up appointment.
- You can also ask about support for your condition and access to psychological support if required.

Face to Face Appointments

If you have been given a face to face appointment, you should attend, unless informed otherwise. Please follow any instructions given concerning wearing a face-covering and maintaining social distance.

Urgent Help

- For urgent medical help, use the NHS 111 online service, or telephone 111 if you are unable to obtain help online.
- In an emergency telephone 999.

Some of the above guidance regarding remote consultations has been adapted from guidance issued by the British Association of Dermatologists.

Support and Information Regarding Paget's Disease

Our website is full of information, news and magazines. There is an easy to use search facility, so you can easily find the information you need. Use the 'contact us' page on our website to get in touch with the Paget's Nurse Helpline or use any of the methods below.

Contact the Paget's Nurse Helpline

- Email: helpline@paget.org.uk
- Call: 0161 799 4646 and ask to speak to the Nurse
- Mobile: 07713568197
- Twitter: @PagetsDisease
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/PagetsAssociation

Facebook Support Group

We have a Facebook Support Group, where members can share their experiences and concerns. To join, please visit www.facebook.com/groups/pagetsdiseaseofbone