Gynaecology Outpatient/clinic appointments – what to expect

Your experience of attending a gynaecology outpatient/clinic appointment will depend on your individual circumstances. This leaflet aims to prepare you for what may happen when you attend the appointment.

Why have I been referred to an outpatient clinic to see a gynaecologist?
Your GP has identified that you have symptoms or needs that require you to see a gynaecologist. He or she has therefore referred you to an outpatient gynaecology clinic. Your GP may have arranged a blood test or ultrasound scan before referring you to hospital.

Some of the reasons you will be referred are:
- Heavy, prolonged periods
- Irregular periods
- Bleeding between periods or after having sex
- Bleeding after the menopause
- Removal of an intrauterine device (coil)
- Discussion about female sterilisation
- Discomfort or continence problems
- Vaginal prolapse
- Abnormal test (e.g. ultrasound scan)

If you are of childbearing age you will ideally have used a reliable form of contraception for at least 3 weeks prior to your clinic appointment (but if not, please still attend the appointment). You will need to bring a urine sample on the day as a pregnancy test may be required prior to any procedures.

What will happen at the clinic appointment?
You will see the gynaecologist or a gynaecologist in training under supervision who will talk to you and discuss the results of any previous tests. Please note that this is not always the Consultant under whose name the clinic is arranged and you may be asked permission for medical students to be present. The doctor might need to ask sensitive relevant information about your personal, social and sexual behaviour and may request to undertake a vaginal examination. Chaperones are always offered. Please feel free to bring someone with you to this appointment. They can come in with you to see the Doctor if you wish to be accompanied.

- **Symptoms** - The doctor will ask you about any symptoms you have been experiencing.
- **Health** – The Doctor will also ask about your general health, any medical problems you suffer from, and any previous surgery. **If you take any medications please bring a list with you.**
- **Examination** - The doctor may also examine you, feeling your tummy, and may also need to perform an internal pelvic examination which may or may not involve a speculum.

What will happen next?
- If you have been referred because of bleeding a biopsy procedure may be performed during your appointment. A small piece of tissue is taken and sent to the lab to be tested. Depending on your symptoms this may be taken from the lining of the womb (often called ‘pipelle’), cervix, vulva or vagina (see below for links to further information).
• If you need an intrauterine device (coil) removing, this may be attempted during your consultation or you may need to come back at a later date.
• If you are coming to discuss female sterilisation, it is best if you come with your husband or partner.
• If you are found to have a prolapsed uterus, the Doctor may suggest a pessary, which we can insert at the appointment. This is a removable device placed into the vagina designed to support any prolapsed pelvic organs.

Some of these examinations and biopsies may be uncomfortable or even painful for a short time. You may benefit from taking some simple analgesia such as Ibuprofen or Paracetamol which you can take just prior to your hospital appointment. If you need any further advice please speak to your local pharmacist or GP.

The doctor will then discuss what has been found on examination. If further treatment is indicated, the doctor will discuss the options with you so that you can make a shared decision with the doctor.

Please note that if you are attending the one-stop clinic for postmenopausal bleeding you may need to wait for further investigations later on the same day. It is therefore advisable to assume the appointment will take up most of your day.

NHS Choices
The UK’s biggest health website, certified as a reliable source of health information: www.nhs.uk:
http://www.nhs.uk/

Patient: Evidence based information on a wide range of medical and health topics: www.patient.info

Relevant leaflets produced by our Trust (‘Hysteroscopy, D&C and endometrial biopsy’ and ‘Pelvic floor repair’ can be found at: http://www.sath.nhs.uk/wards-services/az-services/womens-services/

Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)
PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.
Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888
Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691
Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

Disclaimer
This leaflet is provided for your information only. It must not be used as a substitute for professional medical care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. Always check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This leaflet aims to direct you to quality websites: these are correct and active at the time of production. The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is not responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for ANY form of damages whatsoever resulting from the use (or misuse) of information contained in this leaflet or found on web pages linked to by this leaflet.

Your information
Information about you and your healthcare is held by the NHS. You can find out more about how we hold your information and how it is used on our website.

Information produced by: Women and Children’s Care Group

Version 1: Date of Publication: 7th March 2017
Due for Review on: March 2020

© SaTH NHS Trust