



You and Your Consultant

Liver
NORTH
LIVER PATIENT SUPPORT

Introduction

At some point during your care you are likely to have an appointment with a consultant in the outpatient department. These consultations are important opportunities to understand your condition and your treatment options.

Appointments may take place in person at the hospital, by telephone or online as a video consultation (virtual). All types of consultation are equally important and involve the same clinical discussions.

Due to the busy nature of outpatient clinics, each consultation is usually limited to 10 - 15 minutes. By preparing in advance, you can make the most of this time and ensure you get the information and support you need.

This leaflet explains how to get ready for your consultation.

What to Expect During Your Consultation

Your appointment will usually follow this structure:

1. Taking a history – the consultant will ask about your symptoms and background.
2. Examination – in person this may involve your abdomen or chest; online, the consultant may ask to observe visible symptoms.
3. Reviewing investigations – such as blood tests or scans.
4. Discussion – an explanation of your condition and what it means.
5. Treatment options – looking at what may be helpful for you.
6. Planning ahead – including any follow-up arrangements.

7. Answering your questions – you'll have a chance to raise any concerns.

Having a family member or friend with you can be helpful, whether in person, on the telephone or at the online call, to support you and help remember what was said.

How to Prepare

Being prepared means more time can be spent discussing your condition and answering your questions.

Please have the following information ready:

☑ Contact Details

- Your name, address, date of birth
- Phone numbers for you and a next of kin
- A relative's or friend's contact details (especially if you're on the transplant list)

☑ A Short History of Your Symptoms

- What your symptoms are (e.g. pain, nausea, itching, jaundice)
- When they started and how they've changed
- When you last felt completely well
- If this is a follow-up, how you've been since your last visit

☑ Past Medical History

- Major illnesses or operations you've had and when
- You don't need to know all the medical terms—just what you can recall

☑ Medications & Allergies

- A list of current medications and doses (or bring the medication with you)
- Any allergies you have

☑ Social Information

- Your occupation
- Alcohol intake, smoking habits, or drug use (past and present)

Additional Tips for Phone or Video Appointments

- Make sure you have a quiet, private space for the consultation where you won't be interrupted.
- Test your internet connection and device (computer, tablet, or smartphone) in advance.
- Have your phone nearby in case there are any problems connecting by video.
- Keep your notes, medication list, and any questions you have ready to hand.
- If possible, have a family member or friend join the call for support or to help you remember details.
- Join the call a few minutes early so you're ready when the consultant connects.
- Make sure your camera and microphone are working. Adjust lighting so the consultant can see you clearly.
- Be prepared to show any visible symptoms on camera if asked (for example swelling, jaundice).

Questions You May Want to Ask

- What is the name of my condition? What stage am I at?
- What does the future look like for me? Are there different outcomes depending on treatment and lifestyle?
- What side effects might I experience from my medication? Are there alternatives?
- Is my condition genetic or infectious? What does this mean for my family or those close to me?
- What can I do to help myself? Are there lifestyle changes or support groups that may help?
- What do all these medical terms and

- abbreviations mean? (ask for an explanation of anything unclear)
- Where can I get more information? Are there booklets or trusted websites?
- What should I do in an emergency? Who do I contact if things get worse?

Other Important Information

- Please avoid asking questions the consultant won't be able to answer (e.g. car parking, transport, catering). Speak to reception staff for these types of queries.
- If the clinic is running behind, it may be because another patient needed more time. Your consultant will also give you the time you need.
- If you're ever unhappy with your consultant, you can ask to see someone else. You have a legal right to choose your consultant or hospital. Find out more: <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/patient-choice/Documents/patient-choice-leaflet.pdf>

Final Tips

- Make a list of your questions beforehand
- Bring a notebook or have a way to take notes during the consultation
- Don't hesitate to ask for clarification if something isn't clear

Prepared by: LIVERNORTH – supporting patients with liver disease. Website: www.livernorth.org.uk

Some of the information contained in this leaflet may also appear elsewhere.

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Yes I donate

ORGAN DONATION

9

Take time to talk about organ donation

Many people don't realise that their family's support is needed for organ donation to go ahead.

Information Service provided by:

LIVERNORTH

Tel & Helpline: 0191 3702961

Info@livernorth.org.uk

www.livernorth.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1087226

LIVERNORTH is a national liver patient support charity
and has provided this leaflet free of charge

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