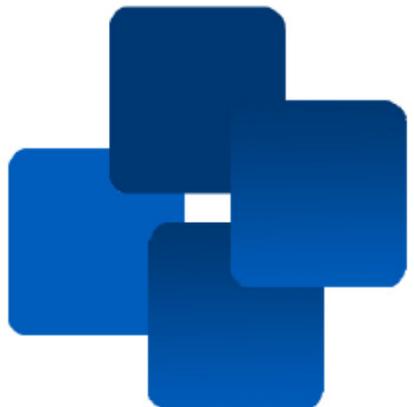


Patient Information

Fracture Clinic

Orthopaedic Department



Introduction

This department deals with patients who have been diagnosed with a fracture or an injury within the A&E department or have been referred by their GP to us with a suspected fracture. This is an appointment only service. Please refer to the back of this information leaflet for details on where to find us within the Lister Hospital.

The Fracture Clinic is not like an ordinary outpatient clinic, it is similar to an A&E department as we do not know what treatments may be required until patients have had their consultation with the doctors.

The Fracture Clinic is run by a team of three consultants and their registrars. You will be under the care of a consultant orthopaedic surgeon although you may not meet them personally. You will be seen by a registrar who will discuss and plan your treatment with a consultant. If you would like to speak to a consultant specifically this can be arranged, although please note that you may need to wait a little longer. Please be aware however, that your named consultant is not always present in the clinic.

We try to keep the waiting times down to an absolute minimum, however some patient treatments can take a long time and then affect the overall clinic waiting times. For example, we may need to take a patient's cast off to remove sutures or clean a wound before/after X-ray, and then they may need a new cast. All of this can extend the waiting times. Also, staff can only undertake treatments once the doctors have prescribed them, therefore it may appear you are being seen out of turn.

We will make regular announcements to inform you of any delays throughout the morning and appreciate your patience with this.

Please note that your appointment begins from when you are sent for an X-ray and/or to the Plaster Room. Depending on your injury, your consultation and treatment could take up to three hours!

Toilet Facilities & Refreshments

There are toilets (including disabled) just before the entrance to the clinic on the right hand side of the corridor.

There is a cold water dispenser in the waiting room just to the left of the entrance to the clinic.

There are vending machines at the top of the outpatient corridor and a café situated at the main entrance to the hospital.

Diabetes

Patients with diabetes should bring their own medicines and/ or food and drink in the event of their wait being extended during their visit to the clinic.

What to do on arrival

On arrival please report to the reception desk which is located just through the door on the right hand side. You will be asked to check and sign that your contact details are all correct. Please make any alterations if necessary and we will update our records accordingly.

The receptionist will hand you a 'Friends and Family Test' survey form which we would appreciate you completing **after** your appointment with the doctor, and before you leave the clinic. There is a post box by the clinic doors where you can leave your form anonymously. This will give you the opportunity to give us some feedback about your experience in the clinic. Any comments you make are read by all of the staff and acted on if possible.

If this is your first visit to the clinic and you are an adult (16 years+) you will also be asked to complete a health promotion questionnaire.

Once you have 'checked in', please take a seat in the waiting area. Please be aware that the clinic can be very busy and many patients will be in wheelchairs or using crutches/sticks. Please therefore ensure that children are supervised at **ALL** times.

Also, we kindly ask that if you are accompanying a relative/ friend, to please vacate your seat to let a patient sit down if no other chairs are available.

Going for an X-ray

Depending on your injury/treatment plan you may be sent to have an X-ray before or after you see a doctor. The X-ray department is situated in the adjacent corridor to the clinic.

All of our X-ray ordering is carried out electronically. A member of the nursing staff will come into the waiting area, call your name and direct you to the X-ray reception desk. The receptionist will give you a slip of paper with your identification details on. Once you have had your X-ray please place this slip in one of the X-ray drop boxes on the wall as instructed by the nurse. We will then know that you have had your X-ray and that you are waiting to be seen.

Please note that you may have a long wait if the X-ray department is busy.

Going to the Plaster Room

Depending on your injury/treatment plan you may be sent to the Plaster Room to have your cast removed before or after you see a doctor. Unless otherwise stated, it is normal procedure to have your cast removed **before** you have an X-ray.

The Plaster Room is situated about half way down the waiting area on the right hand side. A member of staff from the Plaster Room will step out into the waiting area and call you in.

Please note that the Plaster Room can get very busy at times so you may have a long wait.

If you see the doctor first before having your cast removed/applied, you will be asked to sit back out in the waiting area again before being called in.

The staff in the Plaster Room will give you both verbal and written advice with regards to looking after your cast and your affected limb. This will include possible complications you may experience, and what to do and who to contact should you have any concerns.

Consultation

There are nine clinic rooms within the Fracture Clinic. There is an intercom system in use for rooms 1 - 5. These are the rooms used for the Fracture Clinic. Please listen for your name being called out and to which number room you should go to. If you are unaccompanied and in a wheelchair, we will arrange for a member of staff to help you into the room.

Should any of the other rooms be in use a nurse will come into the waiting area and call you in. We are happy for you to be accompanied by a relative/friend if you so wish.

Please note that children (under 16) cannot be seen unless they are accompanied by an adult.

On completion of your consultation the doctor will let you know if you need to attend the clinic again or if you can be discharged. You will be handed a form to take to the reception desk where they can make your next appointment for you before you leave. However, if the receptionists are very busy, they may not be able to make the appointment until the end of the clinic, in which case you will be sent the appointment in the post.

Fit Notes

If you require a fit note (a Statement of Fitness for Work) please ask the doctor at the end of your consultation. Fit notes may also be known as a medical statement, a doctor's note or sick note.

Physiotherapy

Your doctor may advise you to have a course of physiotherapy to aid your recovery.

A referral will be sent from the clinic. If possible an appointment will be made with your local physiotherapy team.

Please note that it may take up to six weeks before you are given a date for your first physiotherapy appointment. If you have not been contacted by this time, please telephone **01438 847520**.

Further Investigations and Tests (CT, MRI & Ultrasound Scans)

If your scan is clinically urgent your doctor will need to discuss this with the radiologist in order to find a slot for you, otherwise, you will need to wait for your scan.

Please note that it may take up to six weeks before you are given a date for your scan. If you do not receive an appointment by this time, please telephone **01438 284030**.

Once you have received a date for your scan, please telephone the **Contact Centre** on **01438 284444** to inform them of the date and ask for an appointment in the Fracture Clinic for two weeks afterwards. This will allow enough time for the scan results to be reported on by the radiologist.

Additional Information

If required, please bring pain relief medication with you when attending the Fracture Clinic as we cannot dispense any in the clinic.

Frequently asked questions

Q - The doctor/nurse in A&E told me I had broken/cracked my bone, but now I have been told it's fractured.

A - A broken, cracked or fractured bone means the same thing, except the word fracture is used as a medical/technical term by the staff in the Fracture Clinic. There are many types of fractures when a broken bone is diagnosed.

Q - The doctor I first saw said that I might need pins/surgery, but I have been told that I do not need it, why?

A - You have been sent to the Fracture Clinic to be seen by a specialist in the treatment of fractures and his / her experience will determine the course of your treatment.

Q - My relative/friend broke the same bone and they did not have this treatment, why do I not have the same as they did?

A - Never listen to anyone else's experiences. Everyone is an individual and has different needs and healing times.

Q - The cast I have is in a strange position, has it been set correctly?

A - Sometimes we need to set your fracture in odd positions in order to try and stop a fracture getting worse, or to help it keep in the correct position to heal.

Q - Why am I not allowed to put weight on my leg yet?

A - Some fractures are unstable and may have a tendency to move out of position if you were to walk on it. If this occurs it often means you will need to have it manipulated or have an operation to correct its position.

Q - Ever since I have had the cast on my pain is worse.

A - Any injury does have a tendency to feel worse for a few days after the accident. It should slowly start feeling better over the following week and it is always best to follow the instructions and information given so we can monitor your progress.

Q - Why have I not had an X-ray today?

A - X-rays are used as a way of telling us what type of fracture you have suffered and will help us decide what course of treatment you will require. Some fractures do not need further X-rays. However, other fractures need to be monitored for position checks and evidence of healing. You should only have an X-ray if it is needed as radiation is harmful to you.

Q - I have been asked to exercise my fingers and make a tight fist, but it really hurts and I do not want to make things worse.

A - It is very important to exercise your fingers and thumb and make a fist. This will stimulate your blood supply which will help reduce the swelling that is the cause of your pain and provide a healthy supply of blood to encourage new bone to form over the fracture site.

Q - Why has my broken bone not healed yet?

A - Many factors determine your healing times; your age, your genetics, the type of fracture you have, where your fracture is, your diet and lifestyle. Drinking alcohol and smoking can delay healing, co-operation with medical advice is advisable.

Q - I have been doing as I am told and it's still not getting better.

A - We do monitor a patient's progress. Some injuries take longer to settle down. Night-time is always highlighted by increased discomfort and pain, especially if you have been busy or active all day. The injury does tend to let you know when it is tired.

Q - I think my cast has been removed too soon. I cannot use my hand / foot. It's become hot and red, painful and swollen.

A - Sometimes when the cast is removed the patient has problems when they begin to use their injured limb for the first time. The injured limb has been locked in the same position by the cast and when this is removed the soft tissues, which have not been used for quite some time, begin to ache. This will settle down in time, you just need to pace yourself, rest a little, and then try again.

Do not let your limb stiffen up again, use painkillers to help you through this rehabilitation period.

Q - Why have I not had any physiotherapy?

A - Not everyone needs to have physiotherapy. Self-help is usually all that is required. It is often a sign of how confident the doctor is of your early recovery when no physiotherapy is required.

Q - Can I drive my car or operate machinery while I have a cast or splint?

A - No. You have a disability; you are **NOT** insured. Any sudden pain could cause you to have an accident and you would be breaking the law.

Q - I have large metal plates and screws on my fracture. If I go through the airport metal detector will it cause it to go off?

A - New airport detectors are now more powerful and could be set off. If this occurs you just need to inform the airport security staff of your operation.

Q - I have now been told that I have arthritis, but I never suffered from it before.

A - As we age we all have some wear and tear of the joints. When you have a fall and suffer an injury it can often cause arthritis to flare up. This added pain could cause your recovery to take a little longer with more pain than normal.

Q - Will my arm / leg be weaker where I have had my fracture?

A - This depends on any other medical conditions, your age, the type of fracture and your own healing. Your fracture can be a little weaker for some time, 6-12 months or so, but after this period and as time passes, your fracture is usually as strong as normal for your own bone type.

Please use this space to note down any questions you may like to ask:

Further Information

More information can be found on NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk

Free Hospital Wi-Fi

Our Wi-Fi service will allow patients and visitors to access e-mails and search the internet. Simply find the '**Free Hospital Wi-Fi**' network on your device. There is no password required. Unfortunately, you will not be able to stream videos or download large files.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Switchboard, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 314333
Physiotherapy appointments	☎ 01438 847520
CT, MRI and Ultrasound Scan appointments	☎ 01438 284030
Contact Centre for Fracture Clinic appointments	☎ 01438 284444

Where to find us

We are located at the Lister Hospital, Level 3, Area 8 in the Yellow Zone.

From the main entrance walk straight ahead, past WH Smith and then turn left down the outpatients corridor. The clinic is situated at the very end of this corridor, on the right hand side.

Wheelchairs

Please note, if required, wheelchairs are usually available for members of the public to use just inside the main entrance of the hospital. These wheelchairs need a £1 coin so that they can be released for use - your £1 coin is refunded when the wheelchair is returned back for the next person to use.

Contact details:

**Lister Hospital
Coreys Mill Lane
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 4AB**

Telephone: 01438 314333

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