

Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) General surgery

What is a 'patient-initiated follow-up' (PIFU)?

A patient-initiated follow-up, also known as PIFU, means that you are in control of making your own follow-up appointments at a time when you need them, or when your circumstances change.

How does PIFU work?

- You will have agreed with your healthcare professional (the person responsible for your care in the general surgery service) that a PIFU is suitable for you. We will write to your GP to let them know
- You will have access to the PIFU service for an agreed period of time. If you need a follow-up appointment during this period, you can contact the hospital to book an appointment without the need to be referred by your GP
- Making an appointment is easy – just call the telephone number provided on the back of this leaflet. We will ask you for your NHS number, which you can find at the top of any hospital letter you have received. If you have registered on the NHS app, you can also find your NHS number there
- We will not contact you to book a PIFU appointment – it has to be initiated by you

What if I don't want a PIFU appointment?

- You do not have to have a follow-up appointment. If you would prefer not to have an appointment, you don't need to do anything
- If you don't contact us to book a follow-up appointment, the PIFU will simply expire and we will send you a letter discharging you from the service

When should I not use PIFU?

- You should not use PIFU for medical problems that are not related to this specialty/condition. For anything else, your GP remains your first point of contact

Using the general surgery PIFU service

- You will have access to the general surgery PIFU service for three months
- If you have not needed to ask for a further appointment during the three months, we will discharge you from the service. You will need to contact your GP to be referred back to the service if you need to be seen in the future

Under what circumstances should I arrange an appointment under my PIFU?

- Your healthcare professional will advise you of the circumstances in which you should arrange an appointment
- This will depend on your specific condition. Some possible reasons to arrange an appointment could include:
 - A progression or relapse of your condition which requires a change in your treatment
 - Concerns about the side effects of your current treatment

To have a PIFU appointment, you must:

- Have been told by your healthcare professional that a PIFU appointment is appropriate for you
- Contact us within the PIFU timeframe advised by your healthcare professional

To book a PIFU appointment in the general surgery service:

- Call us on 01438 288616
- We are open from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday

For more information on the PIFU service

- Go to our website at <https://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/patient-visitors/pifu/>

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