



University
Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Sussex Pituitary Multidisciplinary Team

Department of Endocrinology

Patient information

We are a team of health care professionals who work together to provide specialised care for patients with pituitary problems in Sussex.

What is the pituitary?

The pituitary is a small gland just below the brain which sends out 'chemical messenger' hormones to regulate and control several other glands in different parts of the body (e.g. thyroid, adrenals, ovaries, testes). Each gland produces different hormones which are released into the blood and regulate the activity of other organs and tissues.

The pituitary gland is normally about the size of a bean. Pituitary disease is usually caused by a benign growth (often referred to as an 'adenoma' or 'tumour') on the gland. This may produce excess hormone, or may block hormone production. Sometimes hormone production is not affected, but the growth may cause visual problems if it presses on the nerves which travel from the eyes to the brain.

Who are we and how can we help you?

There are usually several members of the team at each clinic, so that we can provide you with the best opinion and treatment options. These are the members of our team:

Consultant Neurosurgeons

Specialist pituitary neurosurgeons will advise you if you need a pituitary operation, explain the possible risks and benefits of the procedure, and perform the pituitary surgery itself.

Consultant Endocrinologists

Endocrinologists are hormone specialists who work with the surgeons to confirm the diagnosis (find the cause of your pituitary problem), plan the investigations you need, assess your hormone function, advise you about any hormone replacement you might need, and monitor you after your operation. Most pituitary patients need long-term follow-up.

Endocrine Nurse Specialist

The Endocrine Nurse Specialist will ensure you understand your diagnosis and treatment plan, help to arrange the tests you need, and advise you about your hormone replacement. The Endocrine Specialist Nurse is also your 'Key Worker' and the best initial contact if you have any concerns or queries.

Other members of the pituitary multidisciplinary team

We work closely with other colleagues. Depending on your particular needs, you may not meet them in person, but they are involved in our discussions when plans are reviewed. For example, specialists in:

- Neuroradiology, who help us to interpret your scans;
- Neuropathology, who examine the tissue removed by the surgeons;
- Ophthalmology, to assess your vision; and
- Oncology, if you need radiotherapy treatment (this is rarely necessary).

Where is the Sussex Pituitary Multidisciplinary Team based?

We are based at the Hurstwood Park Neurological Centre, on the same site at the Princess Royal Hospital, in Haywards Heath and at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton.

What usually happens at an appointment?

Usually we will have been asked to see you because someone suspects you have a pituitary problem. You may already have had some blood tests and scans. We will discuss your symptoms with you and review the results of the tests that you have had. We will try to work out the best way forward, and discuss that with you. You may need further tests, we may recommend pituitary surgery, or we may recommend continued monitoring without surgery. We will write to your GP and to other doctors involved in your care. We will also send you a copy of the letter, so that you have a written record of what has been suggested. Please be assured that you will always have time to consider your options. You may find it helpful to discuss these options with your family and friends, your GP, the Endocrine Nurse Specialist, or members of the local Pituitary Foundation.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

Endocrine Specialist Nurses uhsussex.ens@nhs.net

Royal Sussex County Hospital

Endocrine specialist nurse 01273 696955 Ext. 64379

Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath

Endocrine specialist nurse 01444 441881 Ext. 65660

If you have any urgent or emergency questions then your GP can advise you or they will contact the hospital on your behalf.

Patient self-help groups and further information:

The Pituitary Foundation Website: www.pituitary.org.uk

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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