



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Patient Initiated Follow-up (PIFU)

Information and advice for patients  
being seen in Gynaecology

Patient information

## **Following your outpatient appointment**

We have changed the way we provide your care as an outpatient. Instead of having regular, routine appointments according to a timetable, we'll support you to manage your own care and to contact us only if you have worries or concerns. This is called Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU).

This leaflet explains how you can access support and advice about your health. If you have any concerns or questions that are not answered in this leaflet please speak to your healthcare professional.

## **How does my Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) work?**

You will have 'open access' to the clinic for a set period of time from the date of your outpatient appointment. Your healthcare professional will let you know what pathway you will be on, in general patients have 6 months.

If you are worried you have further problems related to your original appointment, during the agreed time, contact us and a clinician will review your request and offer you a further appointment if appropriate. If you have problems after this time, please contact your GP.

## **Why am I being offered Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU)?**

The reason we offer follow-up this way is because we want to give you more choice and flexibility and reduce unwanted and unnecessary visits to the hospital. This will help improve patient experience, reduce cost of travel and parking and reduce waiting times for appointments.

## When can I book an appointment?

### You can make a follow up appointment if:

- you have on-going concerns about your condition.
- if the condition for which you were referred changes significantly beyond that expected; or
- if you require further information or clinical input related to the condition for which you were referred that cannot be met by support organisations or your GP or local services.

We want to empower you to contact us when you need us.

## How can I book an appointment?

You can contact the Gynaecology secretary team at the relevant hospital that you were seen at:

**St Richard's Hospital – Chichester:**

[uhsussex.obsgynaesecretariessrh@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.obsgynaesecretariessrh@nhs.net)

**Worthing Hospital:**

[wor.obsgynaeadmin@nhs.net](mailto:wor.obsgynaeadmin@nhs.net)

## When should I contact the service?

If your present symptoms worsen.

## When is a Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU) appointment not appropriate?

PIFU is not appropriate for conditions or symptoms unrelated to the condition you were seen for originally: for these you will need to contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice. PIFU is also not appropriate outside of the specified time frames.

**If you require urgent medical attention, you should contact your GP, NHS 111 or attend your local Emergency Department (ED/A&E) if you are really unwell.**

# Frequently asked questions

## Q. What if I cannot get through to make an appointment by e-mail?

A. If you cannot get through using the e-mails, please contact the Gynaecology secretaries via the relevant hospital switchboard that you were seen at:

**St Richard's Hospital – Chichester: 01243 788122**

**Worthing Hospital: 01903 205111**

## Q. How long will I have to wait for an appointment?

A. The service will triage your concerns and make contact with you within 5 working days or book you into an appointment within 6 weeks depending on the urgency.

## Q. Could I get lost in the system?

A. No. You will be clearly recorded as being on a Patient Initiated Follow Up pathway on our internal systems. If you do not need to see the clinician at all within the recommended timeframe (usually 6 months) after your last appointment, you will be discharged back to your GP who will refer you back to us if you need hospital care again in the future.

## Q. Why have you set an end date for me to make an appointment?

A. Your clinician will decide how long you need to be on the PIFU pathway. It will depend on your condition and their clinical judgement of how long you will need before you can be discharged back to your GP. Our aim is to discharge you once you are well enough.

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Chichester and Worthing.

Ref. number: 2347 Publication date: 04/2024 Review date: 04/2027

© University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust Disclaimer:  
The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.