



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Patient initiated follow-up (PIFU)

Information and advice  
for patients with heart failure

Patient information

## Why have I been given this information?

You are an outpatient, which means that you are getting care from the hospital but you are not staying overnight.

We have changed the way we provide your care as an outpatient. Instead of having regular, routine appointments according to a timetable, we will support you to manage your own care: you do not need to contact us unless you have worries or concerns.

This is called Patient Initiated Follow Up (or PIFU).

## What is this information about?

**This information explains:**

- how PIFU works.
- the benefits of PIFU.
- how and when to book an appointment.

If you have any concerns or questions that are not answered here, please speak to your doctor or nurse.

## How does my patient initiated follow up (PIFU) work?

With PIFU, you will have open access to the clinic for five years from the date of your outpatient appointment.

Open access means that if you are worried, or you have any problems, you can contact the clinic and a doctor or nurse will offer you a further appointment if they think you need one. So instead of being given regular appointments, you can decide when you would like, or need, to see someone.

If you have problems after this time, please contact your GP.

## Why am I being offered patient initiated follow up (PIFU)?

We want to support you to contact us when you need us. PIFU gives you more choice and flexibility. It reduces unwanted and unnecessary visits to the hospital.

This means that you will have a better experience; you will not have to pay so much for travel and parking; and waiting times for appointments will be reduced.

## When can I book an appointment?

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

- you are worried about your condition.
- your condition changes.
- you need more information or advice from a doctor or nurse that you cannot get from other support organisations or your GP.

## How can I book an appointment?

You can contact the telephone helpline on the front of the heart failure booklet you have been given.

A member of the team looking after you will review your request. They may be able to offer you advice and guidance on the phone or decide that you need an appointment.

Appointments may be on the telephone, a video call, or face to face if we need to physically examine you.

We will send you a confirmation of your appointment.

## When should I contact the service?

If you are worried your condition is worsening.

**Symptoms of this may include:**

- increased shortness of breath or fighting for breath.
- worsening peripheral oedema (your ankles or legs are swelling).
- worsening lethargy (feeling tired with no energy).
- not being able to exercise as much.
- new palpitations (when your heart beats too hard or too fast).
- rapid weight gain (2kg or 4lbs in 2 days).

## When is a patient initiated follow up (PIFU) appointment not appropriate?

A PIFU appointment 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.

### Be advised

If you require urgent medical attention, you should contact your GP, NHS 111 or attend A&E if you are really unwell.

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

The service will contact you within 24-72 hours to discuss a plan.

## Could I get lost in the system?

No. You will be clearly recorded as being on Patient Initiated Follow Up pathway on our systems. If you do not need to see the team caring for you at all within five years 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.

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

Your doctor or nurse will decide how long you need to be on the PIFU pathway. It will depend on your condition and their opinion 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 information is intended for patients receiving care at Worthing Hospital and St.Richard's Hospital, Chichester.

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