



**Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Sussex Pituitary Multidisciplinary Team

Patient and Carer Information Leaflet

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

Mr John Norris and Mr Rafid Al-Mahfoudh are specialist pituitary neurosurgeons, who 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.

The Consultant Endocrinologists include: Dr Anna Crown, Dr Trevor Wheatley, Dr David Till and Dr Fahad Ahmed.

Depending on where you live, one of these Consultants will be your principle clinician. The Endocrine Nurse Specialist will be able to advise you who this is, if you are uncertain.

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?

The endocrine specialist nurse is the best initial contact if you have further questions.

Royal Sussex County Hospital

Endocrine specialist nurse

01273 696955

Extension 4379

Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath

Endocrine specialist nurse

01444 441881

Extension 5660

If you have any particularly urgent questions then your GP can advise you and they will contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary. The endocrine specialist nurse can also help you to contact your endocrinologist or neurosurgeon.

Pituitary Foundation patient support group:

The Pituitary Foundation is a pituitary patient support group. Members of the local Sussex group usually attend the clinic and you can talk with them before or after your appointment. They also have patient information leaflets about the pituitary in general, specific pituitary problems, pituitary surgery and hormone replacement therapy. There is further information on their website:

<http://www.pituitary.org.uk>

Support and Information Helpline: 0117 370 1320

Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm

Pituitary Foundation Endocrine Nurse Helpline: 0117 370 1317

providing medical information and support

Mondays 10am - 1pm, 6pm - 8pm; Tuesdays 11am - 2pm;

Wednesdays 10am - 12 noon, 6pm - 8pm.

Text Support - 07786 202 249 Ask questions via text message and the Helpline team will respond within 24 hours (except at weekends and Bank Holidays). The reply to you will appear as a text from 'Pituitary' on your mobile phone.

© Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS 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.

Ref number: 345.1

Publication Date: September 2019

Review Date: September 2021

