



A lifetime of specialist care

Royal Brompton & Harefield **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Harefield Hospital

Fitness for surgery clinic





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This leaflet gives you general information about the fitness for surgery clinic. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a qualified healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions.

What is the fitness for surgery clinic?

Welcome to the fitness for surgery clinic at Harefield Hospital. The aim of the clinic is to carry out a number of tests to make sure you are fit enough to have cardiac surgery, and to reduce the possibility of your operation being cancelled when you are admitted to hospital for surgery.

The fewer operations we have to cancel, the more efficiently our operating theatre scheduling will be. That means we can treat more patients like you.

All patients – except those who have emergency surgery – need to attend the clinic.

It is important you read this leaflet before you visit the clinic to understand the tests and how the clinic works.

We cannot give you a date for your operation at your clinic appointment. This will be decided once we have the results from all of your tests (as described on pages 5-6).

When will my first appointment be?

You will be sent a date for your first clinic appointment within six weeks of being referred to us by your cardiac surgeon.

If the surgeon says you need an urgent appointment (this information will be in your

consultation letter), we will call you, and offer you our next available appointment.

If you are unable to attend the clinic appointment you are offered for any reason, please contact us to re-arrange the date.



Do I need to visit my dentist before I come to clinic?

It is very important that you have visited the dentist in the 12 weeks before your appointment at the clinic. If you have not visited your dentist in that time, please book an appointment to see him / her now to check you have no loose, broken or infected teeth, and your gums are healthy.

Problems with the teeth or gums can be a major source of infection, and bacteria (germs) can enter the bloodstream and get into the heart. This is called endocarditis and can seriously damage the heart valves and cause other serious complications.

Ideally, any dental treatment should be completed before your clinic appointment. However, it is important that you attend your clinic appointment even if your treatment is not complete.

We have enclosed a letter for you to give to your dentist. The form at the bottom of the letter needs to be returned to us confirming you have no loose, broken or infected teeth, and your gums are healthy. This can be returned either by post or in person at your clinic appointment.

We will only add your name to the waiting list for an operation after we have received the completed form from your dentist and we decide you are fit for surgery.

Please note: when you come to the hospital for surgery, our anaesthetist will also inspect your mouth. If he / she is not satisfied with the condition of your teeth and gums, your surgery may have to be cancelled.

What happens at the clinic?

You will meet a specialist nurse who will go through your medical history and examine you. The clinic pharmacist will also discuss your medication with you.

You will have a series of tests.

The tests

We will carry out these tests to check your general health and fitness for surgery:

- Blood tests – to check different areas of your general health.
- Chest X-ray – to look at your heart and lungs.
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) – to look at your heart rhythm.

You may also need:

- Lung function tests – simple breathing tests using a mouthpiece.
- Carotid doppler – an ultrasound that uses sound waves to measure the flow of blood through the large carotid arteries in your


neck that supply blood to the brain.

- An echocardiogram (echo) – uses sound waves to build up a moving picture of the heart. It is similar to the ultrasound scan used in pregnancy.

However, if you have had these tests done at your referring hospital, we will try to obtain the results before your clinic appointment so they do not have to be repeated.

Your consultant's team will then look at your test results and he / she may refer you for further tests on another day, which may include:

- CT scan (computerised tomography) – a special X-ray that allows us to take a series of detailed images of the body.
- MRI scan (magnetic resonance imaging) – a scan that uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of the body.

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- Angiogram – this shows the exact location and seriousness of any narrowed areas in your coronary arteries. During the test, a thin plastic tube called a catheter is inserted into a blood vessel through a small cut in your groin or wrist. Using X-ray, the catheter is directed through your blood vessels to your heart. A special dye is then injected through the catheter so the arteries show up clearly on the screen.
 - Transoesophageal echo (TOE) – uses sound waves (ultrasound) from a probe to check the structure of your heart and how well it is functioning. The probe is about as wide as an index finger and goes in the mouth, down the throat and into the oesophagus so we can see the back of your heart.

What happens after the clinic?

Fit for surgery

If no more tests are needed, we will call to inform you that you are fit for surgery. We will send your medical notes to our theatre scheduling department, which arranges the times and dates for operations at Harefield.

You will receive a letter in the post from the department confirming that you are on the waiting list for your operation.

When your name reaches the top of the waiting list, a member of staff will call you

to offer you a date for your surgery. Once a date is agreed, you will be sent a confirmation letter.

Where possible, the theatre scheduling department aim to give you two weeks' notice of your operation date. This is to give you time to make any arrangements, such as organising transport to Harefield, contacting relatives and so on.

Sometimes, we have to postpone another patient's operation, and we may offer you that operation date and

time at short notice. If this happens, a member of staff from the theatre scheduling department will contact you by telephone.

More information needed

The clinic nurse may inform you that we need to arrange more tests or seek specialist advice.

If you require any further investigations or referrals, you will not be told you are fit for surgery until these issues have been resolved.

This may all seem a long process, but it is important that you are fit to undergo the operation, and that the benefits of surgery outweigh the risks.

What may happen next?

More tests

If more tests or scans are needed, we will contact you and arrange an appointment. We prefer to do these tests at Harefield. We can organise them more quickly than your local hospital and get the results within a couple of days.

Ask your GP to monitor or investigate a problem

If we need your GP to monitor or investigate a problem, we will write to him / her. We will post you a copy of the letter we send. Please make an appointment to see your GP if

he / she has not contacted you by the time you receive your copy of our letter. This will speed things up. When you do visit your GP, please take your copy of the letter with you.

Referral to other specialist consultants

If you need to have specialist treatment before you can have surgery, we will refer you to specialist consultants either at Harefield or your local hospital.

We also do this if we need advice on how best to manage your condition while you are in hospital.



What if I'm having mitral valve surgery?

If you are having mitral valve surgery, a number of doctors will need to discuss your case to decide whether your heart valve can be repaired or replaced. We call this a multidisciplinary team meeting (MDT). It is attended by cardiac

surgeons, cardiologists and echocardiologists. Occasionally, further tests and / or referrals to specialist consultants may be required after the MDT meeting. If that happens, we will tell you and organise the tests and referrals.

What happens if I am a "high-risk" patient?

If you are a "high-risk" patient, cardiac surgeons and cardiologists meet to discuss whether surgery is the best option for you. This is called a joint cardiology and cardiac surgery (JCC) meeting.

Your referring hospital may have already had a JCC meeting about your case. However, if test results from our fitness for surgery clinic show your risk is higher than we expected, we

will also hold a JCC meeting at Harefield. This may result in further tests and / or specialist referrals. You may also need to see a consultant anaesthetist, your cardiologist or cardiac surgeon again to discuss the risk involved in having an operation.

Your consultant will tell you if you are a "high risk" patient, but if you are unsure, please ask us.

What happens after my operation?

If your hospital stay is longer than expected following your operation, your consultant may ask for you to be transferred to your local hospital for further rehabilitation and

recuperation. We will try to transfer you to a hospital of your choice. However, this is not always possible because we have to make sure the hospital can deal with your clinical / rehabilitation needs.

Useful contact details

Fitness for surgery clinic (Monday to Friday, 8am-4pm) **01895 828 542** (direct line)

Theatre scheduling department (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) **01895 828 913** (direct line)

You can leave a message if no-one is available to answer your call at the clinic or the theatre scheduling department. Please leave your name, and CRN number (you will find this on your appointment letter), together with a short message. We will return your call as soon as possible. This may be the next working day.

Please note that the theatre scheduling department will contact you once your name has reached the top of the waiting list.

However, should there be a change in your condition (that is not an emergency), or you have been admitted to hospital, please notify the fitness for surgery clinic team or the theatre scheduling department and we will notify your consultant. If your medical condition has changed, your consultant may request an earlier operation date.

These contact details are not emergency numbers.
In an emergency, please contact your GP or
dial **999** for an ambulance.



Your notes

If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received in hospital and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call PALS on:

- Royal Brompton Hospital – 020 7349 7715
- Harefield Hospital – 01895 826 572

You can also email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.

Royal Brompton Hospital
Sydney Street
London
SW3 6NP
tel: 020 7352 8121
textphone: (18001) 020 7352 8121

Harefield Hospital
Hill End Road
Harefield
Middlesex
UB9 6JH
tel: 01895 823 737
textphone: (18001) 01895 823 737

Website: www.rbht.nhs.uk

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على ترجمة فورية لمضمون هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية، يرجى منك الاتصال بأحد مستخدمينا بجناح المصلحة التي يتم فيها استشفائك. أحد موظفينا سيسعى لترتيب إجراءات الترجمة وإتمامها في الوقت المناسب لك.

Brosurteki bilginin Türkçe tercemesi için tedavi görüyor olduğunuz bölüme bas vurunuz. Bölüm personeli tercemenin gerçekleşmesini en kısa zamanda ayarlayacaktır.

