

What to expect at your Facial Palsy Clinic appointment

Please read this leaflet carefully as it contains important information about your appointment.

We will arrange TWO multidisciplinary facial palsy appointments for you. These will generally be online unless otherwise stated.

Your first appointment will be with our senior psychological therapist. It is routine for all patients to speak with a psychological therapist to consider the emotional impact of facial palsy and discuss whether psychological treatment or support could be helpful. This is particularly important, as we have found that patients who are upset or stressed have tighter facial muscles. This can worsen symptoms and influence the effectiveness of the treatment. The outcome of your psychological therapy assessment will help plan your treatment with the surgical and therapy teams. It is therefore very important that you attend this appointment first. **Cancelling or missing this appointment will delay your appointments with the rest of the team.** If you have any questions about this please contact the psychological therapy team via qvh.psychologicaltherapy@nhs.net or telephone 01342 414478.

Your second appointment will be at least a week later, with a consultant plastic surgeon and specialist facial therapist. We will send a separate appointment letter for this appointment. If you do not receive an appointment letter for the second consultation please call the appointments team on 01342 414141.

What do I need to do before my appointments?

- Complete and return the questionnaire that is attached to this letter (or bring it with you if you are attending in person).
- Bring a list of any prescribed, over the counter or herbal medications you take.
- Bring a photograph of you before you developed facial palsy, if available. This does not apply to patients born with facial palsy.
- Write down any questions you have so that you don't forget what you want to ask on the day.

What will happen at my first appointment with the consultant and therapist?

- Log in online for a virtual appointment (or check in at main outpatients if attending in person).
- Please be patient if the specialists do not immediately join you for your appointment.
- The consultant and therapist will review the answers to your questionnaire, ask you questions about the history of your facial palsy, and examine your face.
- We may ask to take screenshots or photographs of your facial movement for your records.
- You will be able to ask the consultant and the therapist any questions you may have.
- After a discussion about treatment options, we will agree a treatment plan with you. Most patients do not need surgery. The consultant will discuss with you if they feel an operation may be beneficial for you.
- You may need a specialist eye assessment, blood tests or other investigations. If so, we will schedule these to take place on another date and inform you by letter or phone.

What are the treatment options available?

- We have a team of consultants and therapists who specialise in rehabilitation following facial palsy. The emphasis of our treatment is on restoring as much facial function as possible.
- Most patients have facial therapy treatment. This is organised separately. This treatment includes highly specialised home rehabilitation programmes.
- Some patients have further specialist input, or access classes from the psychological therapy team.
- For a very small number of patients surgery may be an option. For example, if you have no smile and we do not anticipate this will improve, surgery may be appropriate to try to help. If you have surgery like this you will also have facial therapy.
- Some patients require surgery to the eye to assist with eye closure and lid positioning.
- We may offer botulinum toxin injections in combination with other treatments to some patients (to reduce muscle over activity).
- There are support groups for patients available around the UK via Facial Palsy UK – please visit www.facialpalsy.org.uk for more details. You can also find more information on facial palsy via our website at <https://www.qvh.nhs.uk/our-services/plastic-surgery-and-burns/facial-palsy>