

**Ear Nose and Throat Outpatients Department
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Information for Patients Attending the Neck Lump Clinic PLEASE READ THIS LEAFLET

Attending a neck lump clinic

Your doctor has referred you to a specialist neck lump clinic so that your symptoms can be assessed and investigated. We try to see patients as soon as we can, but due to demands on the service, there is sometimes a delay of a few weeks between seeing your general practitioner (GP) and your appointment to the neck lump clinic. Performing the tests and getting the results can take time, so come prepared for this. (See 'How long will you be in the clinic?' below)

Clothing

Whilst we do not need you to undress, we will obviously need to examine your neck. It would be helpful to avoid wearing clothing or jewellery that covers your neck, such as polo neck jumpers or necklaces.

Where and when is the clinic held?

New patient clinics are held in ENT outpatients department at St John's Hospital. Due to the large number of patients seen in these clinics and the fact that some patients take longer to be seen than others, there can sometimes be a delay between arriving at the clinic and being seen by a doctor.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can bring a relative or friend to all your consultations (and you may also wish to bring a note pad or tape recorder), but please note that the waiting area in the clinic is limited. Bear in mind also that if you bring children to the clinic, you will need to have someone with you to look after them while you are having your consultation. Please help us by keeping down the number of people who come with you as far as possible.

Who will see me in the clinic?

You will initially be seen by a Head and Neck surgeon, either a consultant or a registrar. This will include a discussion and clinical examination. If further investigations such as an endoscopic examination of your throat or ultrasound scan are required, they will be done at this time.

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What happens next?

Many patients are discharged after their first clinic visit. This is because the specialist is confident that there is no serious abnormality in the neck. However, other patients need further investigations, and these can include:-

Endoscopic examination of the throat

Some neck lumps are caused by problems in the throat. Most patients coming to this clinic will need this examination. It is performed using a thin, fibre optic camera which passes through your nose to the back of your throat. Whilst this can be uncomfortable, most patients manage this without too much difficulty.

Neck Ultrasound

Ultrasound scans are an excellent way of assessing neck lumps, and, if they are needed, can be done in the clinic. An ultrasound scan is performed using a small probe and is not uncomfortable or claustrophobic.

Needle test

By introducing a small needle into any lump which is present, it is possible to tell whether that lump is full of fluid (a cyst) or whether the lump is solid, in which case a small biopsy (tissue sample) is needed. The needle we use for this test is the same size as the needle we use to take blood. The test can be uncomfortable, very similar to a blood test, but the discomfort settles quickly.

Some lumps benefit from a larger biopsy, which calls for a local anaesthetic and a slightly larger needle. Both these tests are performed in the clinic and are done by the head and neck surgeon or the doctor doing your ultrasound scan.

Other tests

It may happen that other tests are needed, which will be done on another day, and this will be discussed with you during your appointment.

How long will I be in the clinic?

This depends on how many tests you have done. If you just have a clinical examination, the average length of time in the clinic is 20 minutes. If you need an ultrasound scan you will usually be in the clinic for up to two hours.

Because we cannot tell you before you come to the clinic what tests you will need, you should make arrangements so that you are free for at least two hours. This then allows for all the tests to be carried out during the same visit.