Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

Your doctor has arranged for you to attend the Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic to help find out what is causing your chest pain.

This leaflet tells you about the clinic and will help you to understand what may happen during your appointment.

What is the Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic?

The clinic has been set up to help find out if your chest pain is caused by a problem with your heart.

Where will I go for my appointment?

This clinic is held in the Cardiac Investigation Unit. Your appointment letter will tell you to go to either the University Hospital of North Tees or the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

How long will my appointment last?

Your appointment at the clinic should last no more than 1 - 2 hours.

Who will I see?

You will be seen by a specialist nurse from the Cardiology Team (specialists in cardiac (heart) care). You may be seen by a cardiac physiologist (a person who is trained to perform and record special tests on the heart).

What will happen during my appointment?

When you arrive you will have an electrocardiogram (ECG).

An ECG records the rhythm, rate and electrical activity of your heart. Small electrodes (sticky pads with a special sensor) are put on your chest which are connected by leads to the ECG machine. This test does not hurt and only takes a few minutes. This may have been done in your GP’s surgery before your appointment.

You will then see the nurse who will ask you questions about your chest pain and examine you. After your assessment you may need some tests to help find the
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cause of your chest pain. Some of these tests will not be carried out on the day you come to the Unit.

These tests may include:

• **an exercise tolerance test (ETT)**

  If this is needed to help with your assessment it is usually carried out on the same day. An exercise tolerance test is sometimes called a treadmill test. You will have an ECG while walking on the treadmill. Further readings are made of your heart.

  The treadmill starts at a gentle walking speed and increases gradually to a brisk walking speed against a slight gradient (hill). You will be supervised at all times. Your heartbeat and blood pressure will be checked throughout the test.

  This can last up to 12 minutes but will depend upon how you cope with the test.

  If you become tired, breathless or have chest pain during the test, the test may be stopped. The test may also be stopped if there are any changes to your heart trace, pulse and blood pressure. You will need to wear loose clothing and comfortable shoes, for example, trainers or flat walking shoes.

  You should only have a light meal before your appointment.

• **an echocardiogram (echo)**

  If this is needed you will usually have this during an outpatient appointment on another day. An echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan of your heart (a painless examination using sound waves to make pictures of the inside of your body). This will be carried out by a cardiac physiologist. You will be asked to lie on a couch, in a private room, and bare your chest. The physiologist will put gel on your chest and will then roll the ultrasound probe over the area. This will show pictures of your heart on the monitor of the ultrasound machine which allows the cardiac team to check the condition of your heart.

  Gel is needed for the scan as it lets the ultrasound probe move smoothly over your skin and helps to give better pictures. The gel may wet your clothes but will not stain them.

  The test will take about 30 - 40 minutes.
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- a chest x-ray
  
  If this is needed and your GP has not already asked for this the chest pain nurse can arrange for you to have this carried out on the same day as your appointment.

- other tests
  
  There are several other cardiac (heart) tests you may be referred for which can help in the assessment of your chest pain.

Do I need to prepare myself for the appointment?

Please bring with you a list of all the medications you are currently taking, either prescribed by your doctor or those you have bought yourself.

When will I be told my test results?

Your GP will be sent a report from the clinic. The report will explain to your GP about the assessment of your chest pain and if any further tests are being arranged for you. You will be sent a copy of this in the post.

Contact numbers

University Hospital of North Tees

Cardiac Services Team
telephone: 01642 624672
Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Non-urgent messages can be left at any time on the answering machine.

University Hospital of Hartlepool

Cardiac Investigation Unit
telephone: 01429 522249
Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Non-urgent messages can be left at any time on the answering machine.
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Further information is available from:

NHS Choices
telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)
Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones
or via the website at www.nhs.uk
Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we’re doing well or if there’s anything which we can improve, that’s why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719  
Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084  
Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883  
Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk