



A guide to...

Dermatology Patient initiated follow-up

Patient Information

How to contact us

Dermatology

Watford General Hospital

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 0HB

Tel: Watford: 01923 217139 Hemel: 01442 287467 SACH: 01727 897837

Email: westherts.derpifu@nhs.net

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



Author	Dr Verity Blackwell
Department	Dermatology
Ratified / Review Date	17/06/2024 / 17/06/2027
ID Number	15/2241/V2



What is PIFU?

PIFU stands for Patient Initiated Follow-Up. The goal is to empower our patients and have them take greater control over their healthcare and appointments. The traditional approach is that we book 'routine' or 'urgent' follow-up appointments for our patients at a set timeframe in the future.

How does PIFU work and when can it help me?

PIFU allows patients greater control over their appointments. Instead of a fixed appointment date and time, patients are able to arrange their own appointments when they are having a flare-up of the disease. You will remain under the care of the team for an agreed period of time. At the end of this period, if you have not used the PIFU service, you will be sent a letter notifying you that you have been discharged back to the care of your GP. The PIFU pathway is only for the condition for which you are seeing the consultant team. Any new conditions will require a new referral from your GP.

Your doctor will decide if you are suitable for the PIFU project. PIFU is useful for helping patients when they most need help, during times of an emergency or flare-up of symptoms related to their dermatological disease. Travelling to hospital is not convenient for many patients and places an unnecessary burden on patients if they are well and do not need an appointment. This aims to give more autonomy to patients over their treatment.

Your doctor will provide you with an outline of the symptoms and signs to look for and when PIFU can help you. If you change your mind about being on this programme, contact your dermatologist through the his/her secretary who will be able to advise you further.

How do I get in touch with the PIFU team?

To arrange a PIFU appointment, call your consultant's secretary at the hospital site where you usually have your appointment on the numbers below.

The team will triage your symptoms and confirm whether a PIFU appointment is the right choice for you. We aim to book patients in for an appointment within 10 working days where this is needed. This could be a face-to-face appointment or telephone appointment, depending on what is most appropriate for you.

When not to use PIFU

PIFU does not replace help for other conditions or emergencies; you may have PIFUs for other specialties.

For non-urgent queries about your condition, contact the Dermatology team as usual on the numbers below. For urgent medical attention, call your GP or 111. If you are very unwell, you should attend A&E or your local walk-in centre.

How to contact us

For urgent flare-ups of your Dermatological condition call:

Watford: 01923 217139 Hemel Hempstead: 01442 287467 St Albans: 01727 897837

If no-one is available to take your call, please leave your name, DOB, NHS or hospital number and a contact number and a member of the team will be in touch as soon as possible.

For non-urgent queries related to your Dermatological condition call:

Dermatology nurse: 01923 217655

We appreciate your feedback on our service and hope to meet our patients' needs. We may send you a questionnaire for feedback and to have your say.