



A guide to...

Gynae Rapid Access Clinic

Patient Information

How to contact us

Gynaecology
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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



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Why have I been referred to hospital?

Your GP has requested an appointment for you at our gynaecology rapid access clinic. This is because they have concerns about your symptoms, and/or an unusual finding on your ultrasound scan, and would like you to have further tests.

What is the Rapid Access Clinic?

It is a clinic where you will see a gynaecologist through the 'two-week wait' appointments system. This NHS system is designed to make sure that patients with symptoms that may be caused by a cancer are seen quickly by a specialist team.

The clinic provides a one-stop service performing investigations on the day of your appointment. Therefore, be aware that you may be in the clinic for a couple of hours. Rapid Access Clinics can be very busy.

The reason for a referral to the Rapid Access Clinic include:

- Vaginal bleeding or discharge in women who have been through the menopause or unexplained bleeding whilst on HRT
- bleeding after sexual intercourse
- an area of your cervix (neck of the womb), vulva or vagina has been identified that looks unusual or abnormal and requires further investigation
- a pelvic abnormality such as an ovarian cyst which requires further investigation
- results of the tests ordered by the GP.

Who will I see in the clinic?

Consultants, doctors in training and nurses who are experienced in gynaecology work in this clinic.

What should I do before my appointment?

One to two hours before your appointment you are advised to take painkillers such as Ibuprofen which should be taken after food or paracetamol assuming that you are not allergic or have any contraindications to these medications.

Women under 55 will need to provide a sample of urine for a pregnancy test. This is hospital policy.

What will happen at the clinic appointment?

- **Consultation:** You will be seen by a consultant or a member of their team who will ask about any symptoms that you have been experiencing and discuss your general health, past medical history including drug allergies and family history. If you take any medication, bring a list with you.
- **Examination:** The doctor will perform abdominal and pelvic examination with the presence of a female chaperone. This involves using a speculum like when you have a cervical smear taken.
- **Ultrasound scan:** This investigation provides images of the abdominal and pelvic organs including the womb, the lining of the womb and ovaries. The probe will be placed on the abdomen or internally using a small probe into the vagina or the back passage. That can cause mild discomfort. Sometimes we will need to infuse small amount of gel internally for accurate assessment of the lining of the womb.

- **Endometrial biopsy:** Depending on your bleeding symptoms and the result of your ultrasound scan, you may require an outpatient endometrial biopsy. This involves passing a small straw called 'Pipelle' inside the womb to take a sample of the endometrium (the lining of your womb). This can be uncomfortable, and you may experience cramp-like period pains. We recommend taking painkillers 30-45 minutes before your appointment to help with this.
- **Vulval biopsy:** If you have a problem with changes to the skin outside the vaginal entrance (the vulva) a biopsy may be taken. This is performed if a lesion is noticed on the vulva. Prior to the biopsy, local anaesthetic is given. One or more small pieces of tissue are taken from the skin and sent to the laboratory for detailed examination. This procedure may cause a little discomfort.
- **Blood tests:** We may need to take some blood tests e.g., to assess possible ovarian diseases or anaemia.
- If an ovarian cyst is found on the ultrasound a blood test called a Ca 125 is recommended to assess whether this cyst is suspicious or not. Further blood tests may also be requested
- A referral for a CT or MRI scan may be required if your ultrasound scan suggestive of any areas need detailed imaging or more information.

What will happen after my appointment?

You will be given details of the follow-up plan and how your investigation results will be communicated. This may be by a phone call or another face-to-face appointment. If you need to be seen by another team then the details for that process will be communicated to you by the doctor.

If further investigations are necessary, you may be referred to the outpatient hysteroscopy clinic and an appointment will be made for at the reception. A hysteroscopy is a test to look inside a woman's womb, using a thin tube with a small camera inside it. If so, you will be given further information to prepare you for your visit to the hysteroscopy clinic.

If you need further treatment which is not urgent, you will be removed from the suspected cancer pathway and offered a routine appointment in due course.

You can also find this on our website

