Queen Elizabeth Hospital Pituitary Clinic

Introduction

Welcome to the Pituitary clinic. My name is:

_____

I am one of the endocrine specialist nurses based within the hospital. I will be your key worker whilst you are undergoing investigations and treatment. If you have any queries or concerns please feel free to contact me on the numbers you have been given.

Why have I been referred to this clinic?

You have been referred by your consultant/physician for an assessment of your pituitary function. You will initially be seen in the nurse-led clinic. The purpose of your initial appointment is to establish whether you are producing an excess or have a deficiency in one or more of the hormones produced in the pituitary gland, and whether you are experiencing any symptoms. The specialist nurse will explain to you in detail the tests and investigations that you will be undergoing.

What is the pituitary gland and what does it do?

The pituitary is a pea-sized gland situated just behind the bridge of your nose. It is attached to an area at the base of the brain called the hypothalamus.

The hypothalamus and the pituitary are part of the hormone or endocrine system. The hypothalamus communicates with the rest of the brain and the nervous system. It senses the body's need for more or less of a particular hormone and controls the amount of hormone released from the pituitary.

What hormones does the pituitary gland produce?

The pituitary consists of a front (anterior) and a back (posterior) portion. In the front portion it produces adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), luteinising hormone (LH), follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), and prolactin. These hormones help regulate bone growth, muscle mass, the body's response to stress, blood sugar, the rate at which the body uses energy, the development of sexual characteristics that develop at puberty, fertility and milk production.

These hormones affect particular 'target' tissues throughout the body, including the thyroid gland, adrenal glands, ovaries (women), and testes (men).

In the back portion of the pituitary gland, oxytocin and antidiuretic hormone (ADH) produced in the hypothalamus are stored for release. ADH controls the amount of water that the kidneys get rid of, which in turn helps to regulate the balance of water in the body. Oxytocin stimulates the contraction of the uterus during and after childbirth, and is responsible for stimulating the release of milk during breastfeeding.

What will happen during my initial appointment?

You will be seen by an endocrine specialist nurse. The specialist nurse will introduce herself to you and provide you with an explanation of the reason for your consultation. She will take a medical history including any symptoms you might have and will record any medications that you are currently taking. Blood samples will be taken to check your hormone levels, and an appointment will be made for a visual field eye test.

What next?

An appointment will be made for you to be either seen in the Joint Surgical or the Medical Pituitary Clinic. The results of your blood tests and the visual field eye examination will be reviewed at this appointment. The findings will be discussed with you and a plan of treatment will be agreed. Treatment may include surgery, medication, or close monitoring.

If you have any questions regarding this clinic or your condition, please make a note below and we will endeavour to answer them when you attend the hospital.

Questions?

For any queries and advice, please contact your respective Endocrine team below:

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Email (preferred method): EndocrineNurses@uhb.nhs.uk
Phone: 0121 371 6950 (we will aim to return telephone call within 3–5 working days)

Heartlands, Solihull and Good Hope Hospitals
Email (preferred method): EndocrineCNSreferral@heartofengland.nhs.uk
Phone: 0121 424 2487 (we will aim to return telephone call within 3–5 working days)

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