



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Gastroenterology Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

PIFU direct tel: 0118 322 8391

Email: rbb-tr.cat4@nhs.net

This leaflet explains what the Gastroenterology Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) service is and how it can help you manage your condition.

What is Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)?

Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) puts you, the patient, in control of when you are seen by the Gastroenterology Department. Attending regular outpatient appointments scheduled by the hospital can cause unnecessary anxiety – e.g. time taken to travel, park and wait for the appointment – if your condition is stable. Sometimes, regular outpatient appointments may not result in any change to your treatment. In fact, your condition may flare up in between regular booked appointments and it is during this time that you need our input.

For all other concerns, or if you are feeling unwell, your GP will remain your first point of contact.

How does PIFU work?

The Gastroenterology team will advise you whether your condition is now suitable to have your follow-ups via PIFU, rather than in regular appointments, scheduled by the hospital.

Your clinician will have advised you about the process and given you this patient information leaflet for you to consider if you want to have your follow-ups in this way; **it is your decision.**

How would I book a PIFU appointment?

Booking an appointment to see the team is a quick and easy process. Just call the number on the cover of this leaflet and a member of our administration team will arrange an appointment for you in the next available slot.

You will have the opportunity to speak with a specialist nurse for immediate advice, if appropriate.

If I do not opt for PIFU, will you still monitor me?

If you opt out of PIFU, we can return to regularly scheduled follow up appointments. If you do go ahead with PIFU, but you do not contact us for an appointment **within two years of being on the PIFU pathway**, we will then we will write a discharge letter to your GP. At this point, your GP will be your first point of contact, and if they feel it is appropriate, they will refer you back to our care.

What if I am worried and change my mind about this style of follow-up?

Just tell us and we will go back to booking regular hospital appointments for you to attend for your review. These are usually every 12 months if you are stable, but can be reduced to every 6 months or less if you have concerning symptoms – the decision will be made in discussion with your consultant. Please discuss any concerns with a member of the team, who will be happy to help.

When should I arrange a PIFU?

You should call if you experience a flare-up of your symptoms and feel that you need to be seen in the clinic.

If you have any concerns associated with your condition (but not a flare up) you can still contact the **Gastroenterology admin team** on **0118 322 8391**.

When not to use PIFU

If you require urgent medical advice, you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local Walk-in centre; or, if you are really unwell, your local Emergency Department (A&E) via NHS 111 or 999.

How do I make a PIFU appointment?

If you have a flare up of your symptoms and need advice or an appointment, just follow the steps below and the team will help you.

Four easy steps:

- 1 Call the Gastroenterology Team on 0118 322 8391 (between 8am and 5pm).**
- 2 Explain to the Team that you need to have a PIFU follow-up appointment.**
- 3 Agree an appointment date and time.**

We do not have an answering machine system for patients when calling out of hours. In the event you need contact us outside of our regular working hours (Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm) please email in and provide the following information with your query:

- Email to **rbb-tr.CAT4@NHS.net**
- Your full name and date of birth.
- Your hospital number and/or NHS number.
- A telephone number where we can call you during normal hours, between 8am-5pm.
- **Date of your last specialist appointment.**

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.