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Clinical Photography



Patient information

Clinical Photography



Excellent patient care, together

What is Clinical Photography?

Clinical photography provides a visual record of medical conditions during stages of treatment or for diagnosis.

Why have I been asked to have photographs taken?

Photographs are a good way to show your medical condition before, during or after treatment for your clinical records. Sometimes they are taken to diagnose and plan the most appropriate treatment. They also enable clinical staff to assess the progress of your treatment by comparing your current condition with previous photographs.

Who asked for the photographs?

Your consultant has requested the photos and will explain why they are needed. You will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you agree to the photos being taken and used for your treatment.

Consent to photography

The Trust has a strict policy to ensure that we have your agreement before any photos are taken and that they will only be used in ways you have agreed to. Whether or not you decide to agree will not affect your treatment.

With your written permission, the photos may also be used for teaching doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals, or published in a medical book or journal.

There are three types of consent:

- **Medical records only** – this means that the photographs will be kept in your medical records and can only be used by clinical staff involved with your treatment or clinical assessment.
- **Training**- this means that your photographs may be used for teaching trainee doctors and other medical staff.
- **Publication** - your doctor might ask if we can use the photographs for another specific purpose such as publication in a medical journal or research. In this case you should know the exact publication in which your picture(s) will be used. Your doctor may not know until sometime later that a photograph is needed for a publication. In these cases, they will contact you to ask for your permission.

Changing your consent

At any time, if you want to change the consent you have given, please contact the Clinical Photography department and your records will be amended according to your wishes. You might also wish to discuss the use of your photographs with your consultant. Please note that although we can amend future use, retrospective withdrawal of consent for training or publication is not reliable as information may already be in the public domain.

What do I do with the consent form?

The clinical photography consent form provides instructions for the photographer so please bring it with you to your appointment. It will be photographed and uploaded to your medical record together with your photos to record the level of use permitted.

Will I have to wait?

If you are sent to our department at a busy time, there may be a wait before you can be seen. Occasionally the photographers will be unavailable. If this is the case, please retain your request form and telephone us to arrange another appointment. You can leave once the photos have been taken and the images will be uploaded to your electronic patient record for your consultant to view.

Who will take my photographs?

You will be photographed by a professional clinical photographer who is registered with the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) and The Institute of Medical Illustrators (IMI). This means they follow a strict code of conduct and update their skills regularly.

Please let us know if you would prefer a male or female photographer and we will try to accommodate this. If this is not possible, let us know if you would us to provide a chaperone. You may prefer a relative or friend to be present during photography, please inform the photographer as soon as you arrive at the department.

If you are unable to come to the studio, a photographer may visit you in the ward. If a photographer is unavailable, an authorised member of staff for example, a nurse or a doctor may take a photo using a secure Trust device. We can assure you that all staff will respect your privacy, dignity, and confidentiality.

Will I be recognisable in the photographs?

We try to conceal your identity in all images but it may not always be possible depending on the area to be photographed. It may be difficult to make your image completely anonymous, but every effort will be made to protect your right to confidentiality in line with data protection legislation. If you have any concerns, please discuss it with the photographer.

What will the photographer ask me to do?

You will be invited into the studio where the photographer will ask for your signed consent form to check before starting. The photographer will explain which photographs are to be taken and show you how to sit or stand to help produce anatomically correct medical records.

You may be asked to remove glasses, jewellery, make-up or clothing, or use a hairband to keep hair away from your face. This is either to ensure the area of importance can be seen or that there is nothing personal which might identify you.

What to expect

We use flash lighting which can be quite bright so try to avoid looking directly at the light as the photograph is taken.

We may need to place a small sticky ruler on your skin and use a dermatoscope for close-up photos.



A dermatoscope has around ten times magnification which helps to diagnose and monitor skin lesions. It rests on the surface of your skin and is used in combination with alcohol gel or ultrasound gel.



We may need to use dental retractors or mirrors to see into your mouth more clearly. Retractors are used to hold back cheeks to get a clear, unobstructed view of the teeth and oral cavity.

Where do the photographs go?

Photographs are uploaded to the hospital's secure electronic patient record (EPR). Access to EPR is restricted to medical staff who have a legitimate reason to look at your notes. The staff must have a username and password to access the system.

Who owns the photographs?

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust owns the copyright to all the photographs taken by the Clinical Photography team. It is illegal for any unauthorised person to make copies of your photographs.

Can I ask to see my photographs?

Yes. Please speak to your consultant at the time of your next appointment. You may also request a copy of your health records including clinical photographs. Applications can be made using this portal: <https://westherts.ams-sar.com/>

For mole screening, your doctor may request that you receive a copy to help self-monitor your condition at home.

Further questions

We understand that you may be nervous or have questions about what will take place during the photographic session and hope that you will inform us of any concerns you may have. The photographers will be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding your visit to the department but they are unable to discuss your medical condition or treatment. Any questions about your condition should be discussed with your doctor.

How to contact us

Clinical Photography

Medical Illustration

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire

WD18 0HB

Tel: 01923 436662

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366 (ext:3830)

Opening hours

Monday to Friday, 7:00am to 4:00pm

How to find us

Our clinic room is at Watford General but not within the main building. We are based in the Orthodontic and Maxillofacial Surgery (Oral Surgery) portacabin, next to the Helen Donald Unit.

By car (Thomas Sawyer Way entrance)

From the visitors' car parks, walk straight up the hill towards the main building entrance but do not enter. Keep the main building to your left and walk straight on until you reach a zebra crossing. Cross and turn left down the sloped side road. About halfway down, on the right-hand side, is the Maxillofacial and Orthodontics Department (Oral Surgery) portacabin. Enter the blue double doors signposted with Clinical Photography above and ask for the photographer at the reception desk.

Walking (Vicarage Road entrance)

From the Vicarage Road entrance walk straight ahead keeping the Women's and Children's (Maternity) building to your right. When you have reached the end of this building (Ophthalmology is on the corner), turn right down the sloped side road. About halfway down, on the right-hand side, is the Maxillofacial and Orthodontics Department (Oral Surgery) portacabin. Enter the blue double doors signposted with Clinical Photography above and ask for the photographer at the reception desk.

Other information and support

Institute of Medical Illustrators (IMI) <https://www.imi.org.uk/>

Healthcare Science (HCS) Practitioner Register <https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/>

Useful web addresses

PALS: www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/patientexperience/pals.asp

Watford hospital information: www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk

Saba parking: www.sabaparking.co.uk/app

PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net.



Language



Large Print



Braille



Audio

Concerns, complaints or suggestions

If you are unhappy with your experience or would like to give feedback, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is available to patients, relatives, carers and friends to raise concerns.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

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