Virtual Hospital

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NHS
West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Patient information

Virtual Hospital

South and West Herts Health and Care Partnership

Excellent patient care, together

Welcome to our Virtual Hospital

Our virtual hospital provides a holistic approach to care for people in their place of residence, minimising the need for hospitalisation.

During your admission to our virtual hospital (VH), you are a patient under the care of a consultant or a community health team and will be monitored remotely.

The virtual hospital is part of South and West Herts Health & Care Partnership, working with community and hospitals partners to care for you through the virtual hospital. Please find links below to our website and YouTube video for more information about the Virtual Hospital:

Virtual hospital :: West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

https://youtube/9m22kVwDaFs

How the virtual hospital improves your care

- It reduces the risk of you needing to come back to hospital, by remotely monitoring your health
- It enables you to recover from the comfort of your own home or within familiar settings, which is good for your emotional and mental wellbeing
- It involves GPs throughout your care with us to improve communication between all the healthcare teams looking after you.
- It personalises your care to match your needs.
- It reduces the stress an admission to hospital can cause to both you and your support network.

How will I be cared for?



You will be cared for remotely by our clinical team who will keep in touch daily.

We may provide monitoring devices for you to use at home. The device will either transmit results automatically to a central hub at Watford General Hospital, or you will update it manually. For transmitted results, these can be seen in an App on a mobile device called Masimo.

You will be given guidance and an instruction booklet which has clear information about the app and how to use the devices. By downloading the app used, you are consenting to your data being shared with the healthcare team.

The hub is staffed by a wide variety of clinicians and nurses from 8am to 8pm every day and they will review your results several times a day, and they will call you to see how you are getting on. If the nurses have any concerns, they will discuss them with a consultant.

Your ongoing care will be reviewed daily by a team which will include specialist nurses, and doctors from both the hospital and the community including a GP. The VH Doctor will liaise with your own GP to make sure they are up to date with your care.

How long will I be under the care of the Virtual Hospital?

The length of time will depend on your recovery from your acute condition. A clinician will monitor your progress regularly, similar to the way they would at a physical hospital.

You will be “onboarded” which means someone will tell you about the Virtual Hospital and what equipment you need for them to care for you. If you are onboarded whilst a patient in a ward bed, your care programme will begin the day after you are discharged from the hospital.

If you are asked to join Virtual Hospital in a community setting, such as in your home or a clinic, we aim to onboard you within 24 hours, either over the phone or via our community team visiting you.

What should I do whilst under the Virtual Hospital’s Care?

- You will need to ensure any manually measured observations are recorded and communicated to the hub either via the Masimo app or by phone call/text e.g., weight, temperature, etc.
- There is a daily questionnaire you must complete via the Masimo app or during a phone call with Hub Nurse so that we can track your wellbeing.
- Please answer phone calls from the virtual hospital. We will call you to discuss your wellbeing, so look out for these calls. We may phone you a few times to ensure you are well. Sometimes these calls may come from a blocked number.
- Because your care plan is holistic and personalised, you may also have visits from community trusts and voluntary services and allow them in so they can help to look after you. All staff will carry identification. You will be advised about any visits before they take place
- Please report any new symptoms, or changes to symptoms, to the VH team.
- You need to stay within the local area whilst you are cared for by the Virtual Hospital. If you are planning to travel out of this area, please let the team know so we can decide the best plan to monitor you and ensure your safety is maintained.

- If any medication changes are made, please arrange for the medication to be collected from an appropriate pharmacy.
- You will need to come to the hospital if any further diagnostic or outpatient tests are required.
- Sometimes, it may be necessary to arrange face-to-face appointments and assessments to review your care – please attend these.
- Please take care of all the equipment provided for you, including chargers, so that we can reuse them once you are better and your care with the virtual hospital ends.

How am I monitored?

You may be monitored with equipment and an app, or you may not require this level of technology. If you do require this level of technology, you will be monitored via the Masimo SafetyNet app, which is downloaded to your mobile phone. If you do not have a mobile phone, we will lend you an iPad (tablet-android). You will be shown how to use the devices provided, and the app before you leave hospital or are admitted to the virtual hospital.

If you are given 'wearables' (example below), these will continuously monitor you and send the information to the team automatically.



Observations and how often they are taken

For Heart Failure patients:

Weigh yourself once a day, all other observations need to be provided at roughly 8.30am, 11.30am and 3.30pm (blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturations).

Depending on the equipment provided, you may need to use Masimo App. This will be explained to you if required.

To weigh yourself, please use the scales on a hard floor surface to get an accurate measurement.

Contact number for the Heart Failure VH monitoring team: 07816 196263

For ABC (asthma, bronchiectasis, and COPD) patients:

Observations need to be provided at roughly 8.30am, 11.30am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm (this may include blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturations).

Depending on the equipment provided, you may need to use the Masimo App. This will be explained to you if required.

Contact number for the ABC VH monitoring team: 07773 650571

For general medical patients

Observations need to be provided at roughly 8.30am, 11.30am and 3.30pm (this may include temperature, heart rate and oxygen saturations)

Depending on the equipment provided, you may need to use the Masimo App. This will be explained to you if required.

Contact number for the General Medical VH monitoring team: 07779 380449

For post-surgery patients (colorectal and urology)

Observations need to be provided at roughly 8.30am, 11.30am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm (this may include blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturations).

Depending on the equipment provided, you may need to use the Masimo App. This will be explained to you if required.

Contact number for the Post Surgery VH monitoring team: 07966 265349

For frailty patients

We will call you to discuss your wellbeing. You will be supported by our community team working within Central London Community Healthcare Trust.

Blood Tests

If you are required to have a blood test, we may ask that you come to one of our blood clinics.

In order to book into this appointment, the blood clinic uses Swift Queue. You will need to sign up with your email address and NHS number here:

www.swiftqueue.co.uk

Wheelchair access for visiting on site

If you are required to attend the hospital site for investigations or a review, and are worried about your mobility, please contact the hub team ahead of your visit. We have a dedicated wheelchair and if available, can provide this to make your visit more comfortable.

Furthermore, there are wheelchairs available for hire on level 2 of the multi-storey car park at Watford General Hospital. The first 3 hours are free to hire these wheelchairs.

What should I do if I feel unwell or worried?

The virtual hospital team is available every day from 8am to 8pm.
Please call the virtual hospital hub and ask for advice.

If you have a question about your care and you feel you need to speak to someone, then please call the Hub team on the following numbers:

Between the hours of 8am-6pm, please call one of the following numbers:

01923 217063

01923 217770

Between 6pm-8pm, Monday to Sunday please call 07816 196256

If you are worried outside of 8am-8pm, please call 111.

If it is an emergency or if you feel very unwell, please call 999.

Emergency Contact Procedure

Immediate call: If you do not answer the phone, the Hub staff will try calling again within five minutes and then at 10 minutes.

Next-of-kin escalation: If there's still no answer after 10 minutes, the staff will contact your designated next of kin.

Emergency services activation: If neither you nor your next of kin can be reached within 20 minutes, 999 (Police and Ambulance service) will be called for your safety. If needed, the plan includes coordinating your admission to an acute hospital.

What happens after I am discharged from the Virtual Hospital?

You will be informed that you are being discharged and provided with a plan of any follow-ups needed. A discharge summary will be posted to your address, and a copy will be sent to your GP surgery. If you have any queries about your

discharge or follow up plans, please contact the Virtual Hospital hub and a member of the team will be able to assist.

Once discharged, any monitoring devices and their chargers must be returned to the one of the following locations:

Watford General Hospital Main hospital reception	**Hemel Hempstead Hospital** - Level 3, Verulam Wing Reception	**St Albans City Hospital** Main hospital reception
Mon - Fri: 08:00-16:00	Mon - Fri: 08:00-16:00	Mon - Fri: 08:00-13:00

If you cannot bring the equipment back to one of these sites, we will find an alternative solution such as organising for a volunteer to collect the equipment from your home. Some devices are disposable, but most need returning so that we can reuse them once you are better and your care with the virtual hospital ends.

What happens to my data and information?

By downloading the app used, you are consenting to your data being shared with the healthcare team. We will keep an electronic record of your recorded results for seven years.

Contact Details

Virtual Hospital Hub

01923 217063

01923 217770

If you have any questions about your care, you can email the VH team: westherts.virtualhospital@nhs.net

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.









Survey - Friends and Family Test

We welcome feedback about your care, this feedback is shared with all staff we can improve patients' experience. Click this link or use the QR code with your smartphone.

For more information, on our Patient Advice and Liaison Service, visit our website using the QR code or type in: bit.ly/4o3QVFJ

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