

# The Bowel Function Service

Information and advice for patients

## *Colorectal*

### What is the bowel function service?

This service is for people who have functional bowel disorders. A functional bowel disorder is where the bowel does not work properly, resulting in one or more of the following problems:

- Constipation
- Difficulty emptying your bowel
- Needing to rush to the toilet
- Losing control of your bowel
- Pain when going to the toilet
- Abdominal (tummy) bloating

### Who is the service run by?

The bowel function service is run by nurses who have had additional training in bowel function, which enables them to provide specialist care and advice.

### What does the service offer?

The bowel function service offers:

- Information about bowel disorders.
- Advice on living with a bowel disorder.
- Investigations for bowel disorders.
- Treatments including:
  - **Conservative therapies** – such as pelvic floor exercises, dietary and lifestyle changes and toilet positioning.
  - **Biofeedback** – pelvic floor muscle re-training and muscle co-ordination.
  - **Irrigation** – clearing the bowel using an irrigating device and warm water.
  - **Percutaneous tibial nerve stimulation for faecal incontinence** – where an electrical stimulator is used to stimulate a nerve near your ankle.
  - **Sacral nerve stimulation for faecal incontinence** – where an electrical stimulator is implanted into your buttocks.
- Referral for surgery if other methods fail.

7 out of 10 people who are referred to the service have an improvement in their symptoms, feel they can manage their problem more effectively and can resume activities that had been previously affected by their bowel problems.

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### **How can I access the service?**

You can be referred to this service by any healthcare professional. We will then send you an appointment by post.

### **Where will my appointment be held?**

Clinics are held at Sandwell General Hospital and Rowley Regis Hospital.

If you are part of the Integrated Care Pathway for faecal incontinence (your nurse will have told you about this if you are) then you can be seen at The Lyng Centre or Malling Health in West Bromwich, or at Neptune Health Park in Tipton (addresses are on the back of this leaflet).

Your appointment may take up to 1 hour. If you need further appointments after this you will be offered these every 8 – 12 weeks. You will be given a questionnaire and bowel diary at your first appointment, and we ask that you bring these with you to future appointments.

If you are unable to attend an appointment, or if the appointment time is not convenient, please let us know in advance.

### **How can I help myself?**

The bowel function nurses will agree a programme of lifestyle changes and exercises with you. In order to help yourself and see an improvement you will need to continue these new habits for the rest of your life. We can give you the information, exercises and advice, but only you can make the difference. It may seem like hard work, but the effort and commitment is worth it as the majority of people find that their symptoms improve and their bowel no longer controls their life.

### **How can I contact the bowel function service?**

If you have any questions you can contact the bowel function service on:

Tel: 0121 507 2497

Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm

If no one is available to take your call, please leave a message with your name and contact number and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you can telephone the hospital switchboard on 0121 553 1831, hold to speak to an advisor and ask them to bleep 6264.

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### Bowel function clinics

**Sandwell General Hospital**  
Lyndon  
West Bromwich  
B71 4HJ

**The Lyng Centre**  
Frank Fisher Way  
West Bromwich  
B70 7AW

**Malling Health**  
The Great Bridge Centre  
Charles Street  
West Bromwich  
B70 0BF

**Rowley Regis Hospital**  
Moor Lane  
Rowley Regis  
B65 8DA

**Neptune Health Park**  
Sedgley Road West  
Tipton  
DY4 8PX

### Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk) and [www.swbhengage.com](http://www.swbhengage.com), follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



A Teaching Trust of The University of Birmingham  
Incorporating City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis Hospitals  
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ML4211  
Issue Date: May 2013  
Review Date: May 2015