Attending a Neck Lump Clinic

Your doctor has referred you to a specialist neck lump clinic so that your symptoms can be assessed and investigated. We try to see patients as soon as we can, but due to demands on the service, there is sometimes a delay of a few weeks between seeing your general practitioner (GP) and your appointment to the neck lump clinic. Performing the tests and getting the results can take time, so come prepared for this.

Clothing

Whilst we do not need you to undress, we will obviously need to examine your neck. It would be helpful to avoid wearing clothing or jewellery that covers your neck, such as polo neck jumpers or necklaces.

Where and when is the clinic held?

New patient clinics are held in ENT outpatient department at the Lauriston Building.

Due to the large number of patients seen in these clinics and the fact that some patients may take longer to be seen than others, there can sometimes be a delay between arriving at the clinic and being seen by a doctor.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes you can bring a relative or friend to all your consultations (and you may also wish to bring a note pad or tape recorder), but please note the waiting area in the clinic is limited.

Bear in mind also that if you bring children to the clinic, you will need to have someone with you to look after them while you are having your consultation.

Please help us by keeping down the number of people who come with you as far as possible.

Who will I see in the clinic?

You will initially be seen by a Head and Neck surgeon, either a consultant or a registrar. This will include a discussion and clinical examination. If further investigations such as an endoscopic examination of your throat or ultrasound scan are required, they will be done at this time.
What happens next?

Many patients are discharged after their first clinic visit. This is because the specialist is confident that there is no serious abnormality in the neck. However, other patients need further investigation and these can include:

- **Endoscopic examination of the throat**
  
  Some neck lumps are caused by problems in the throat. Most patients coming to clinic will need this examination. It is performed using a thin, fibre optic camera which passes through your nose to the back of your throat. Whilst this can be uncomfortable, most patients manage without too much difficulty.

- **Neck ultrasound**
  
  Ultrasound scans are an excellent way of assessing neck lumps, and, if they are needed, can be done in the clinic. An ultrasound scan is performed using a small probe and is not uncomfortable or claustrophobic.

- **Needle test**
  
  By introducing a small needle into any lump which is present, it is possible to tell whether the lump is full of fluid (a cyst) or whether the lump is solid, in which case a small biopsy (tissue sample) is needed. The needle we use for this test is the same size as the needle we use to take blood. The test can be uncomfortable, very similar to a blood test, but the discomfort settles quickly.