Patient information – accident and emergency department

Attending Moorfields’ A&E

Welcome to the accident and emergency (A&E) department at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

This leaflet aims to give you some information about our A&E department, what to expect during your visit and explain how you will be assessed.

On arrival at A&E, you will be directed to the welcome desk. You will be given a number which will be called by the reception staff at the main reception desk as soon as they are free to register you.

Once you have been registered, you will be called to see the triage nurse who will ask you some questions about your eye problem and inform you of your approximate waiting time. This initial assessment determines how urgent your eye problem is. The assessment is based on the questions asked by the nurse and what the nurse observes.

The term ‘triage’ means the process of sorting patients into groups to determine the urgency of their eye condition. Patients are seen according to their clinical priority, and not necessarily their time of arrival.

Once the triage nurse has completed the assessment, you will be assigned to one of three categories. These are:

- Red category for more urgent cases
- Green category for less urgent cases
- ‘See and treat’ – where you will be attended to by a specially-trained emergency nurse practitioner (ENP)

Factors other than eye conditions are considered when determining how long you will wait. For example, priority is given to children and patients who are generally unwell to ensure that they are not kept waiting. We also prioritise patients with possible infectious eye conditions who will be asked to wait in a separate waiting area and will be seen as promptly as
possible to prevent them from infecting others.

If you are experiencing any pain, please tell the triage nurse. They will arrange for you to be given medication, either in the form of eye drops or tablets to control the pain.

Following your initial triage assessment, one of two things will happen:

a) You will be examined by a nurse who will ask some questions, check your vision and carry out any relevant tests, after which you will wait to see a doctor

b) You will see our emergency nurse practitioners who will carry out a full examination and provide you with treatment

Our aim is to see, treat and discharge patients within four hours, which is the national target for A&E departments, but we make every effort to do so in under this time

Please note that our hospital is a single specialty eye hospital and we can only treat eye problems. If you have a general health problem, you should attend your local A&E department or contact your GP.

During your visit to our A&E, we appreciate your patience and understanding while waiting for our doctors or nurses to see and treat you.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to approach any of our staff – we are happy to help.

Facilities available during your visit
Toilets
The nearest toilets are situated along the corridor adjacent to the triage cubicles – follow the yellow line on the floor from the main A&E waiting area and you will see them.

Shop
The Friends of Moorfields shop, where you can purchase drinks, snacks, magazines, papers and other goods, is opposite the main clinic area on the ground floor (follow the yellow line and you will find it).

Coffee shop
There is a coffee shop on the ground floor where you can purchase hot drinks and snacks – follow the yellow line.
If the shop and coffee shop are closed, there are several vending machines on the ground floor where drinks and snacks can be purchased. They are located in A&E and adjacent to the coffee shop.

Pharmacy
If you have been given a prescription for medications, please take it to pharmacy department, which you will find at the end of the yellow line. The pharmacy is open
Monday to Friday, 9am–7pm, and on Saturday, 9am–4pm.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks
Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to start their consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further – see above for contact details. For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, please visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.

Moorfields Direct advice line
Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm, for information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)
Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325
Email: pals@moorfields.nhs.uk
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.