TIA clinic

This leaflet tells you what to expect when you see the stroke specialist during your TIA appointment.

Why was I referred to the TIA clinic?

You were referred to the TIA clinic because you had symptoms suggesting you’ve had a transient ischaemic attack (TIA), or a minor stroke. A TIA is sometimes called a mini stroke.

What may have caused my symptoms?

Possibly a Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA): this can take place because of a temporary blockage in a blood vessel in a part of the brain.

This can be similar to a stroke with symptoms such as weakness, numbness, talking problems or trouble with your vision. A TIA is different as it only lasts between a few minutes to a few hours.

There are other possible causes for these types of symptoms and over half of the people attending the clinic turn out not to have a TIA.

Why is an urgent appointment with a stroke specialist so important?

About one in ten people who have a TIA develop a stroke within the next week, **but** we can greatly reduce this with the right treatment.

The right medication can reduce your chance of a stroke, as can changes to your diet and exercise. Rarely an operation may be useful. We will discuss all this when you see us in clinic.

What happens now?

The clinician who initially diagnosed you may give you medication to take. You need to take this each day until you are seen in our clinic. They will also make a referral to the TIA Service.

The TIA clinic runs daily including weekends. Every day, the stroke specialist on duty will review all new referrals. If we decide that we need to see you urgently over the weekend or at a bank holiday, the Co-ordinator of the TIA Service will phone you on the day tell you what time to come to the unit.

Otherwise, the TIA co-ordinator will be in touch on the next working day to arrange an appointment for you to come in. In some cases, the appointment will be a telephone consultation only. The appointment will usually be on the same day. If you have not heard from us within 2 working days, please ring the TIA co-ordinator on 0117 342 4800.

What can I expect to happen at my appointment?

A stroke specialist clinician will ask you to tell them about the symptoms, your past medical history, and what medicines you are currently taking. This will be followed by a physical examination. The clinician will discuss your diagnosis with you. You may be given new medications or a prescription. If you currently pay for your prescriptions, please ensure that you have a means of payment with you.

What may we need to do? (each case is different – you may not need all these investigations)

* + A blood pressure check
  + A heart recording (ECG)
  + A scan of the arteries in your neck
  + A brain scan
  + A blood test
  + A consultation with a stroke specialist - this may be a consultant, registrar or an advanced nurse practitioner for stroke

**You can expect to be at the clinic for at least 3-4 hours and the appointment may take most of the day**

Where is the TIA clinic?

There are clinics at Bristol Royal Infirmary and Weston General Hospital and weekend clinics at Southmead Hospital.

**The TIA Co-ordinator will tell you which clinic to attend.**

Bristol Royal Infirmary

On normal working days, the TIA clinic co-ordinator will tell you where you need to go. This will generally be the TIA Outpatient clinic A403 (Zone A, Level 4). Sometimes they will ask you to go straight to the radiology department to have a brain scan (Location A217, Zone A, Level 2) or to the vascular sciences department for a carotid doppler scan (Location A225, Zone A, Level 2).

Weston General Hospital

On normal working days, the TIA clinic co-ordinator will tell you where you need to go. This will generally be the TIA Outpatient Clinic within The Main Outpatients area of Weston General Hospital. The Main Outpatients is located at the front of the hospital.

Southmead Hospital

At weekends, clinics will be delivered at Southmead Hospital by the stroke/neurology service (Location Gate 12).

What do I need to bring?

Please bring a list of all the prescribed tablets you take – this is very important. If there are other tablets you buy over the counter, please tell us about these. Please also bring any medications you will require throughout the day. If possible, it will be helpful for the person who witnessed you having your symptoms to come to the appointment as well.

There are cafes and shops all locations where you can purchase refreshments. Alternatively, you may want to bring your own provisions.

What about driving?

It is not safe or legal for you to drive until you have been seen in clinic. We will discuss any possible further driving restrictions related to your diagnosis with you in the clinic.

What if I have further symptoms before the specialist appointment?

If you think you are having a stroke, don’t wait – call 999!

What do I need to do?

Please bear these points in mind:

* + DO NOT DRIVE until you are assessed at the clinic
  + it would be helpful if anyone who witnessed your symptoms could accompany you to the appointment
  + bring any medications that you are taking, or your repeat prescription order form
  + eat and drink as normal
  + your appointment may take several hours.
  + If you have any recurrence of symptoms before your clinic appointment and they resolve within 5 minutes please call NHS 111, if they do not resolve within 5 minutes call 999.