

TIA clinic

This leaflet tells you what to expect when you see the stroke specialist at Southmead Hospital, NBT

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 type 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 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 3-4 hours.

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 stroke team here at Southmead hospital.

The TIA clinic runs daily including weekends. Every day, the stroke consultant 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,



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the Unit Co-ordinator of the Acute Stroke Unit (Gate 7A) will phone you on the day between 8:30 and 9:30 am to tell you what time to come to the unit.

Otherwise, the TIA co-ordinator will be in touch on the next working day between 9 and 10 am to arrange an appointment for you to come in. This will usually be on the same day. **If you have not heard from us within 2 working days, please ring the TIA coordinator on 011741 44405.**

Where is the TIA clinic?

The clinic is in Southmead Hospital in the Brunel Building. Where exactly you need to go depends on what day we see you:

On **normal working days**, the **TIA clinic coordinator will tell you where you need to go**. This will **generally** be the **Neurology Outpatient Department on Gate 36 (Pink Zone, Level 1)**. Sometimes they will ask you to go straight to the radiology department to have a brain scan (Gate 18, Level 1). If we need to see you **on a weekend or bank holiday**, you will need to come to the **Acute Stroke Unit on Gate 7A (Green Zone, Level 3)**.

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.

If possible, it will be helpful for **the person who witnessed you having your symptoms** to come to the appointment as well.

There is a Costa Coffee, a small shop and a League of Friend's coffee shop on Level 1 of the Brunel building 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!**



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