



Fact sheet

Visiting the Centre as a Private Patient

Dr Giles Elrington. Updated January 2012

Here are the most frequently asked questions about coming to see us at The National Migraine Centre. We hope that this leaflet will prepare you for your visit and tell you everything you need to know. If you have any other questions please telephone us on 020 7251 3322.

1. What service does the National Migraine Centre provide?

The National Migraine Centre provides access to a team of doctors with a specialist interest in the management of migraine and other headaches. We offer outpatient appointments by prior arrangement. We welcome all patients from across the UK and abroad. We are also an active research centre and conduct both independent studies and clinical drug trials. You may be given the opportunity to try new treatments in a clinical study. We ask all our patients to consider taking part in current or future trials, but there is no obligation and our care for you is not affected in any way. The Centre is a renowned teaching centre. You may be asked if a visiting specialist doctor, GP, nurse or student could sit in on your consultation. Please let us know if you would prefer for this not to happen.

How much does it cost?

The National Migraine Centre is an independent medical charity. We do not receive NHS or government funding and are dependent on your financial support. We welcome attendance by private patients as all the fees are put into the Charity funds to help us to see more patients. The fee for the first consultation is £300. The fees for second and subsequent consultations are £200. You must pay on the day of your appointment. You can pay by cash, cheque, credit or debit card. If you intend to claim the fees back through a private medical insurance company please discuss this with us prior to your appointment.

Are your doctors qualified?

All our medical staff are fully qualified doctors with a specialist interest in headache and are registered with the UK's General Medical Council. Our doctors provide expertise on various specialist areas including: neurology, women's health and ophthalmology. You will be assigned to one doctor who you will usually see at each of your visits. If, for any reason, you would prefer to see a different doctor at a future visit, this can easily be arranged.

How do I make an appointment?

There are two ways for you to make an appointment:

a) **Self-referral:** Please telephone the Centre to make an appointment. We will ask you for your name, address, telephone number. Alternatively, you can visit our website www.nationalmigrainecentre.org.uk and complete the online form with your contact details and we will call you back.

b) **Doctor referral:** Ask to be referred by your physician who will write a letter with a brief description of your relevant headache/medical history. If you have other illnesses or a complicated headache history we would prefer you to be referred by your doctor who can give us information about you.

National Migraine Centre 22 Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6DX

T: 020 7251 3322 F: 020 7490 2183 E: info@NationalMigraineCentre.org.uk W: NationalMigraineCentre.org.uk

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How long does an appointment take?

We allow 40 minutes for your first appointment. This gives the doctor plenty of time to take a detailed history of your migraines and general health and to review headache diaries you may have kept (see question 7 overleaf). You will have a brief examination by the doctor, which will include checking your blood pressure, your eyes, your reflexes and listening to your chest. You will not usually be required to undress. An individual treatment plan will be devised for you and discussed with you.

After your first appointment, we will write a medical report with full details on your diagnosis, recommended drug and non-drug treatment strategies, which may include diet, exercise and complementary therapies. You will be sent a copy of this report. We recommend that you take the report to your doctor to prescribe any necessary medications for you. We are able to provide a private prescription following a consultation.

Since there are no specific tests for most types of headaches, brain scans and further investigations are not normally required if a diagnosis is clear. Should they be necessary, we will advise this in our report to your doctor, who can organise these locally for you.

A follow up appointment lasts for 20 minutes. This will include a review of your diary cards and an assessment of how you are coping with your migraine. Your management strategy may be revised if necessary. A handwritten report will be given to you, for your GP. We will give you a photocopy.

We always try to ensure that our clinics run on time, but this cannot be guaranteed. Please help us by arriving at least 10 minutes early to allow time for registration.

How many visits do I need?

After your first appointment we usually offer a follow-up appointment around 3 months later, although this does vary depending on diagnosis, frequency of headaches and individual treatment plans.

After this, your doctor will offer further follow-up appointments only if you and the doctor think it is appropriate. You may call the centre at any time to arrange a follow-up appointment if this becomes necessary.

What should I bring with me?

Please bring your headache diary (see question 8 below). The doctor will need to know how many different headaches you have, roughly how old you were when they started, so you may want to make some notes to bring with you. Please also bring a list of current and previous treatments and medications, if you can. We will also need your GP's name, address and telephone number.

Why should I keep a headache diary?

Diary cards provide a great deal of relevant information about your headaches, particularly how often you get them, how long they last and what your symptoms are. They are also valuable in assisting the doctor with diagnosis, assessing trigger factors and assessing the effectiveness of treatments.

If you are able to come to the centre with diary information at your first visit this will help the doctor to help you. Otherwise you will be given diary cards on your first visit and they will be assessed at your follow up visit. You can download diaries with instructions from our website at www.nationalmigrainecentre.org.uk. Alternatively, please send us a stamped addressed envelope and we will send you one.



Where are you located?

The National Migraine Centre is located in central London at 22 Charterhouse Square, near Barbican and Farringdon tube stations. There is a map on the back of your appointment letter and further details about buses and car parking are available on our website at www.nationalmigrainecentre.org.uk.

What if I have special needs?

If you have any special needs then please telephone us to discuss your individual requirements and we will do our very best to help you.

Where can I get general information about migraine?

You can get lots of helpful information about living with migraine and links to other migraine sites from our website at www.nationalmigrainecentre.org.uk.