

## Transfers

In certain circumstances, such as with head injuries or serious burns, patients may be transferred to a hospital which can offer more specialist treatment. This ensures the patient receives the best care possible.

Before a patient is transferred, he or she will be stabilised in the emergency department.

## X-rays and blood tests

You may sometimes feel you should have an x-ray but the doctor doesn't order one.

This is because x-rays do not show everything and they are a large source of radiation which accumulate in your body. We therefore try not to x-ray if not necessary.

Even if certain bones **are** broken, the treatment is the same so there is no need to x-ray.

It is vital that if you suspect you may be pregnant that you tell the doctor, nurse or radiographer before your x-ray.

Your x-ray will be reviewed by your clinician and you will be treated accordingly. Your x-ray will be reported on by a radiologist and you may be contacted if this reveals anything new.

Please be aware that there can sometimes be a wait for x-ray or blood test results.

## Help us to help You

Our emergency department provides a service for emergencies and injuries. To help the department keep waiting times to a minimum for yourself and other patients, please only use the service for this purpose.

For minor illnesses and injuries your GP or pharmacy may be able to offer advice and treatment or alternatively you can contact NHS Direct (a 24-hour advice service) on 0845 4647.

## Discharge

Most patients will not be admitted to hospital. The nurse or doctor will give you advice regarding your condition and sometimes a leaflet. If you have any concerns or questions please ask.

## Crutches and walking aids

Please return these as soon as you do not need them as they are required for other patients like yourself.

If you require this leaflet in an alternative format please contact our Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) on: 01234 795814

Date of publication: February 2008  
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## Patient Information Leaflet Emergency Department



**A leaflet about the services  
provided by the  
Emergency Department (ED)**

## Welcome to the Emergency Department

Bedford Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) is a busy department providing 24-hour emergency care. The department provides treatment for both major and minor cases and treats approximately 200 patients a day.

We aim to provide a quality service to provide treatment for patients with both minor and major injuries and accidents.

We operate an efficient service with an experienced team of consultants, doctors, emergency nurse practitioners, nurses, emergency department technicians and domestic staff.

We aim to treat all patients within four hours in line with government targets.

## Arriving at the Emergency Department

Whether you arrive at the department by car, taxi, foot or ambulance, please be aware that treatment of our patients is prioritised according to the clinical need and also how unwell you are.



If you arrive by ambulance, this does not necessarily mean you will be treated immediately and you may still be taken to the waiting area.

Please only call for an ambulance in an emergency.

## Waiting to be seen

Please be aware that patients are prioritised according to clinical need rather than their arrival time. Therefore you may be required to wait for treatment and sometimes patients arriving after you may be treated before you.

On occasions, you may be required to wait when the department appears to be very quiet. Much of the work carried out takes place in parts of the department you cannot see and sometimes one or more patients may arrive with serious problems which may require the attention of many of our staff.

Our staff work extremely hard, sometimes in stressful conditions, to treat all patients as quickly as possible whilst providing a quality patient service. We appreciate that waiting for treatment can be an unnerving experience but please try to be patient.

Some doctors in the department are speciality doctors who have been called down to see a specific patient with a particular condition. These doctors do not normally work in the emergency department and are unable to treat other patients.

Please be assured that we won't have forgotten about you but do not hesitate to ask at the reception if you are concerned that you have been waiting longer than expected or if your condition deteriorates.

**Discourtesy or rudeness will not speed up your treatment and the hospital operates a zero tolerance policy on violence and aggression towards our staff.**

## Initial assessment

Not all patients are assessed on arrival to the Emergency Department. If you think you need to be, or require pain relief, please ask the receptionist who will inform the assessment nurse.

After assessment you may be referred to an on-call GP (BEDOC). Patients may also be sent to x-ray or seen by a speciality doctor - this does not mean they are jumping the queue.

## We are here to help you

The Emergency Department is here to treat emergency cases and injuries; however, the department is not the most appropriate place of care for chronic or long term problems/illnesses. Your GP can refer you for further investigations or specialist opinion.

In most cases you will need to see your GP/family doctor after seeing us.

If you do not have one contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

## Consultation

You will be seen by a doctor or an emergency nurse practitioner. Please ask if you do not understand what they discuss with you.

You may then have to wait for tests, treatment or to be seen by a speciality doctor.

Unfortunately we are unable to provide a second opinion and there are some tests and appointments that only your GP can make.