



Medicine for Older People Frailty Same Day Emergency Care

The information in this leaflet is about frailty and the Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) Frailty service. It explains:

- Why you have been referred.
- What the SDEC is and how it can help people living with frailty.
- What to expect from your visit.

The SDEC unit is based in the Portesham Unit which is on Level 1 (ground floor) of the North Wing of Dorset County Hospital.

What is Frailty?

Frailty is a health condition that you may get as you get older. It happens when several different body systems lose their built-in reserves and then no longer work as well to keep you healthy. You may have noticed that:

- You have lost weight without trying.
- You feel very tired and doing anything is an effort.
- You walk slower than you used to.
- You feel weaker than in the past or your grip is weaker.
- You don't get much exercise.

Some symptoms of frailty can be mental, such as changes in memory or the way that we make decisions or think about things.

People who have frailty can be more at risk of:

- Having falls.
- Losing their ability to move around independently.
- Having side effects from medication.
- Having to stay in hospital.
- Needing long term care, either at home or in a care setting.

For many older people a stay in hospital can lead to changes in their ability to function at home. For these people it may be better for them to stay in their own home and have assessments as an out-patient.

Why have I been referred?

A member of the team looking after you in the community has identified that you may benefit from an assessment or investigations that are only available at Dorset County Hospital.

Alternatively, checks made when you arrived at the Emergency Department identified that you have signs of frailty and that you may benefit from a specialised assessment.

What to expect from your visit

The SDEC provides care on the day that you come into hospital for emergency care. The care that we will give you will mean that you do not have to stay in hospital and can go back home.

Our aim is to help you and your family and carers:

- Understand what frailty is.
- How you can do things which may improve your condition or make living with frailty easier for you.
- Know how to access help and support.

The team will do a thorough assessment of you so that you can be checked, diagnosed and treated quickly so that you do not have to stay in hospital.

This assessment may include:

- A physical examination – for example, listening to your heart and lungs.
- Blood tests or scans.
- Assessing your mood and memory.
- Talking to you about your home and the support that you have.
- A review of the medicines that you take.
- An assessment of your strength and ability to move around safely.

What should I bring?

Because the assessment is comprehensive, your visit to SDEC may be over several hours. If you are here over lunchtime, food will be available for you.

Please remember to bring:

- A copy of your prescription.
- Your medication so that you can take these as usual.
- Your walking aid.
- Hearing aids and glasses if needed.

You are welcome to bring a relative or carer to support you during the assessment.

What happens next?

Once the assessment and investigations are completed, we will discuss with you and your carer the outcome of our findings. Together we will decide a plan of treatment, considering what matters to you.

A discharge summary will be sent to your GP and the local community services who support patients in their own home.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

Frailty SDEC: 01305 256917

Useful Websites:

Age UK:

www.ageuk.org.uk

Website with further information on frailty and self-management

Dorset Council:

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults

Has information about help living at home, financial advice, carers support, live well advice and links to voluntary services.

Help and Kindness

www.helpandkindness.co.uk

Directory of local support and services to support you in your own home.

About this leaflet:

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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