

About the National Musculoskeletal Advice & Triage Service (MATS) helpline 0800 917 9390

This helpline is a phone triage service for people experiencing muscle, back or joint problems. These problems are often known as musculoskeletal problems or MSK for short. Many MSK problems will settle with self-care and often you do not need to see a healthcare professional.

Fully trained call operators, supported by clinicians offer expert advice about what you can do to treat and manage your condition.

If required, they can refer you to a local NHS Healthcare professional – such as a physiotherapist or podiatrist.

MATS helpline CAN help with:

- Safely directing you to key information and advice to help with your problem
- Finding out if you need to see an NHS Healthcare professional about your MSK problem
- Arranging for your details to be sent to a healthcare professional if required

MATS helpline CAN'T help with:

- Booking and managing appointments for example with a physiotherapist or podiatrist
- Arranging home visits - this should be arranged by your doctor



What happens when I phone?

You will be asked a series of questions normally lasting around seven minutes. This process has been developed to offer you safe and appropriate care.

Callers will be directed to key self-care information to help with their MSK problem. This information, including where to download our 'MSK Help' app, can be found on our web site: www.nhsinform.co.uk/msk

If you require additional support, it may be suggested that your details are sent to your local NHS service who will arrange an appointment for you.

No improvement with self-care advice

You might feel some pain and discomfort when you start to exercise, this is normal. If your symptoms don't improve after two weeks of following our advice on our web site www.nhsinform.co.uk/msk then please call us back.

Referral to an NHS healthcare professional

If your details have been sent to your local NHS service, you do not need to call them. They will contact you about your appointment. Waiting times vary.

Cancelling or changing appointments

If you no longer need an appointment or need to change it, contact your local service and let them know.

For local service details visit: www.nhsinform.co.uk/msk/overview/helpline

Eligibility

To use this service you must:

- Be registered with a GP
- Be aged 16 or over

If you are under 16 please speak to your GP for further information.

Worsening or changing symptoms

If your symptoms change or worsen, speak to your GP or phone NHS 24 on 111 if you cannot wait until your GP surgery reopens.

