

**Summary** – This is to inform you of the referral protocol for patients with acute aortic dissection (AAD) in south London. Patients who were formerly referred to St George’s Hospital should now be referred to King’s Health Partners (King’s College Hospital or St Thomas’ Hospital).

**AAD** - Aortic dissection describes the condition when a separation has occurred in aortic wall intima, causing blood flow into a new false channel composed of the inner and outer layers of the media. An aortic dissection is considered acute if the process is less than [14 days old](#). [The presentation](#) of aortic dissection can be quite variable. It is not an easy diagnosis to make and an index of suspicion is required.

**Changes to the referral protocol** – **The flow chart below shows the changes in the protocol.** The main change will be the movement of patients to either King’s College or St Thomas’ hospitals. Referring hospitals should refer to the on call rota, which will provide the main switchboard to call (either King’s or St Thomas’). If the referring hospital does not have the on call rota, they may call either of the two hospitals to be directed to the correct one.

**Impacted organisations / anticipated case number** – This change impacts all hospitals that would refer AAD patients into St George’s (listed below). The average case number is 1.5 (operated only) per month.

- **Croydon University Hospital,**
- **Kingston Hospital, and**
- **Epsom and St Helier’s hospitals.**

**Rationale** – Whilst teams at St George’s are working together with local partners, NHS England and NHS Improvement towards reviewing and improving the service to ensure they provide a safe service to patients, we request that you follow this temporary new protocol for referrals of patients with AAD which bypasses the St George’s unit in lieu of King’s and St Thomas’ hospitals.

**Support for clinical teams** – Please check with your on call consultant or the receiving hospital’s on call registrar with any issues.

### Contact details

King’s College Hospital Switchboard: 020 3299 9000

Guy’s and St Thomas’ Switchboard: 020 7188 7188

## Local A&E

- Patient taken to local A&E. Urgent diagnosis required to minimise delay and increase chance of survival.

## King's/ GSTT

- If the referring hospital has the on call rota they will know which main switchboard to call (either King's or GSTT).
- If they don't have the on call rota then they will try one of the two hospitals and be directed to the correct one.

## Registrar on call

- Switchboard will put them through to the registrar on call.
- The registrar will need relevant details about the patient including for example; blood test results, patient history and CT scan imaging.

## Consultant on call

- Registrar on call will contact the consultant on call to give further instructions to local A&E.

## Transfer

- Patient will be prepped and transferred.
- CT scans performed in A&E should also be sent ahead of the patient electronically, or by CD if necessary, to the consultant prior to the operation.