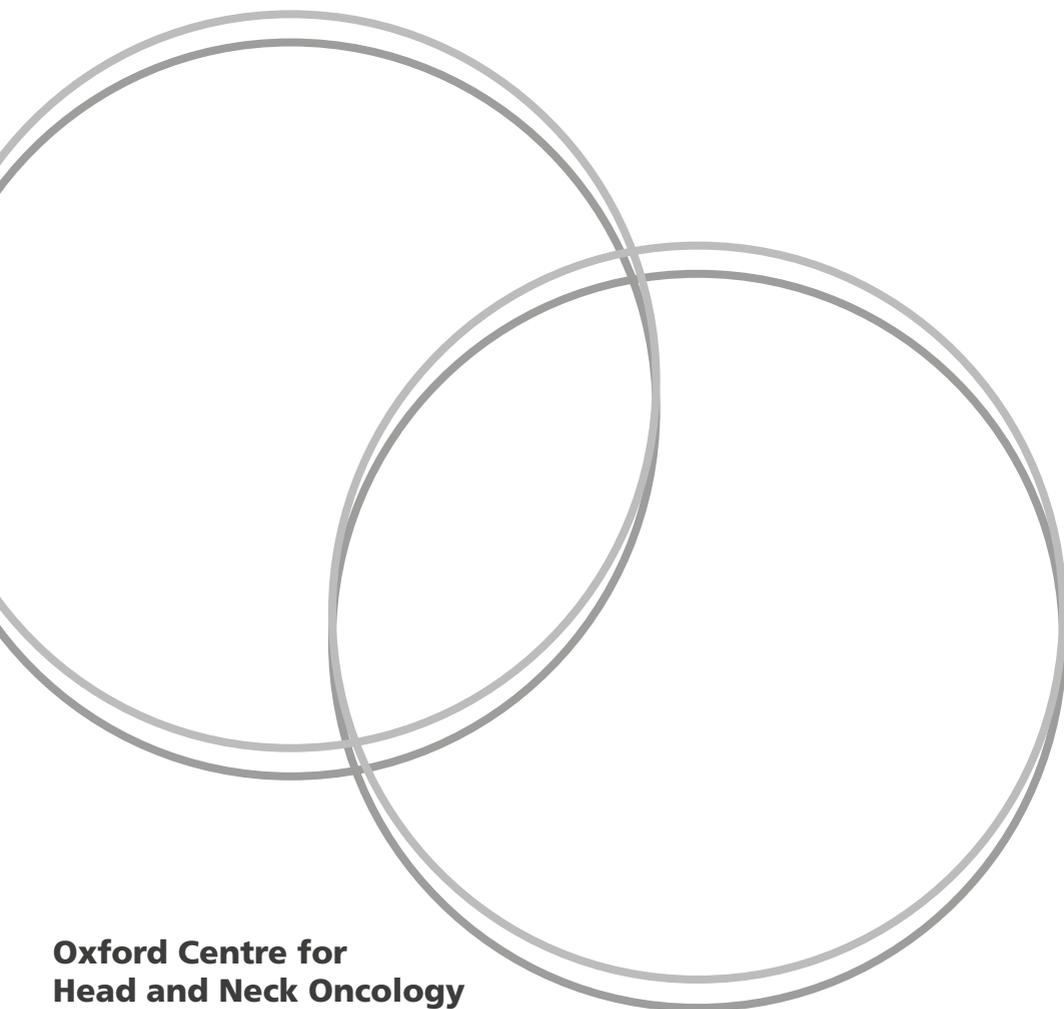




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for Patients About the Head and Neck Team



**Oxford Centre for
Head and Neck Oncology**

We understand that you have recently been told you have cancer and may need treatment. When this treatment happens you will probably see a lot of different hospital staff; each of these people will give you a specific type of care. We have produced this leaflet to help you to understand who these people are, what part they play in your treatment and what they can help you with. We have also included some information to help you prepare for your treatment. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to speak to any member of the team.

The team involved in your treatment are:

Consultant Head and Neck Surgeons (ENT)

Telephone: 01865 223 556

Consultant Head and Neck Surgeons (Maxillofacial)

Telephone: 01865 223 556

Consultant Plastic Surgeons

Telephone: 01865 223 556

Consultant Clinical Oncologists

Telephone: 01865 235 197

Consultant in Restorative Dentistry

Telephone: 01865 743 112

Dental Hygiene Therapist

Telephone: 01865 743 112

Head and Neck Cancer Specialist Nurses

Telephone: 01865 234 346

Speech and Language Therapists

Telephone: 01865 231 205

Dietitians

Telephone: 01865 223 560

After your cancer diagnosis, your test results and medical history are discussed in a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting. All the head and neck team will be at this meeting to plan a programme of treatment specific to you.

The surgical team will carry out any operations you might need. Oncologists will provide radiotherapy or chemotherapy treatment. It is usual for patients undergoing these treatments to need help from other specialists, both before and after. In this hospital we all work as a team, each with their own job, as described below.

Head and neck cancer Specialist Nurses

It is the role of the head and neck cancer Specialist Nurses to support you from diagnosis and throughout treatment. At diagnosis and at each stage of your care pathway, you will receive information about the treatment options available so that you can decide what is best for you. The head and neck cancer Specialist Nurses can give practical advice and information about any aspect of your illness or treatment. They will also be a link for you between home, the local health care team and hospital.

The team will follow your progress for five years after your treatment is completed, at monthly intervals at first, but less frequently each year.

If you would like to meet someone who has had similar treatment, please ask the head and neck cancer Specialist Nurses who will be pleased to organise this for you. They can be contacted on **01865 234 346**.

Key worker

The key worker will be your main point of contact with the hospital. They will coordinate your care. This role is usually carried out by a Specialist Nurse, but this person may change as your needs change. We will let you know when this happens.

Dietitian

It is the dietitian's job to make sure that you are receiving all the nutrients that your body needs. This is particularly important during any treatment, when you need to be as strong as possible. This is so that your immune system is working as well as it can and any wounds heal well afterwards.

If you are experiencing difficulty with eating or drinking or have lost weight, the dietitian may give you advice about:

- suitable foods to eat
- adding extra nourishment to your food
- supplement drinks
- balanced meals.

Sometimes it may be necessary for you to be fed through a tube. A tube which is passed through your nose into your stomach is called a nasogastric tube. Alternatively you may have a tube placed directly into your stomach. This is called a gastrostomy tube. The type of tube will depend upon the treatment you have.

After an operation you may not be able to eat or drink for a period of days, depending on which operation you have. During this time you may have liquid nutrition through a nasogastric or gastrostomy tube. When you start to eat and drink again the speech and language therapists will advise you about foods which are safe to swallow. It may take time before you are able to eat and drink normally again (possibly months). The dietitian will help support you throughout your treatment, as your needs change.

Speech and language therapy

This service is available if you are experiencing speech (communication) or swallowing (eating /drinking) problems. You may find that you are having difficulties in these areas at the time of diagnosis, or may need help with changes in speech or swallowing that result from treatment such as surgery or radiotherapy. The speech and language therapist may advise you on exercises to encourage movement of the muscles involved in speech and swallowing, or provide equipment to make communicating and eating and drinking easier. You may need help to learn a new way to control your swallowing, as well as advice about foods and drinks which are likely to be safely and easily managed.

Consultant in restorative dentistry

Before starting any treatments, you will need a full dental assessment. This will include an X-ray of your jaw (an orthopantomogram or OPG). You will also see the consultant in restorative dentistry, who will discuss any dental work you may need to have done. This may include teeth extractions, which will be arranged by the hospital. Our consultant dentists will see you again following the completion of your treatments, to discuss and plan any possible dental repair.

What you can do to help

While you are waiting for your treatment, there are things that you can do to help.

- If you are a smoker, then try to stop smoking. Your hospital team can refer you to a smoking cessation advisor. They will help and support you to quit smoking and advise you about nicotine replacement, which is available on prescription.
- Speak to your GP or Specialist Nurses about a prescription exemption certificate. Having a cancer diagnosis entitles you to free prescriptions.
- Reduce alcohol intake to a maximum of 3 units per day (e.g. one 250ml glass of wine or one and a half pints of normal strength beer/lager). If you need support to reduce your alcohol intake, please speak to your Specialist Nurse.
- Eat a well-balanced, high calorie diet. If you need help with this please follow the advice given by your dietitian.
- Seek support from your family and friends – you will need their help to get you through. Talk about your diagnosis and what treatment involves.
- You may want to contact **Heads2gether (H2G)**:
The national head and neck cancer support group.
H2G members have already made the journey from diagnosis to recovery.

Website: www.heads2gether.net

Telephone: **0800 023 4550**

- If you have concerns about the financial impact of cancer, call the Macmillan Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau benefits service in the Radiotherapy department.
Telephone: **01865 227 083**
- Feel free to bring a relative or friend with you to the clinic visits; they may be able to support you and help remember what has been discussed.

- Write down any questions you or your family have so that we can answer them next time you attend the hospital. Remember that these clinics are busy and you may have to wait a little while.
- To download more leaflets or to look at information, visit:
Website: www.maggiescentres.org/cancerlinks
For head and neck information go to cancer types, then click on head and neck.
- The hospital chaplains are happy to help anyone whether they are religious or not. A chaplain is always available for personal support to patients and their families at times of difficulty. There is a chapel and prayer room on each hospital site which are open at all times for prayer and quiet contemplation. The chaplaincy team can provide information and make contact with all faith communities.

How to contact us

This is a lot of information for you to take in. If you have any questions or would like more information then please call your keyworker or the Specialist Nurses:

Head and Neck Cancer Specialist Nurses

Telephone: **01865 234 346**

Email: headandneck.specialistnurses@ouh.nhs.uk

Other helpful numbers:

Day Surgery Unit **01865 225 288**

Blenheim Ward **01865 223 535**

Churchill Intensive Care Unit **01865 235 077**

Churchill Overnight Recovery Unit **01865 235 127**

You can also get further information and support from:
Maggie's Cancer Information Centre at the Churchill Hospital.

Telephone: **01865 225 690**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Compiled with the help of patients, carers and The Head and Neck Team
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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

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