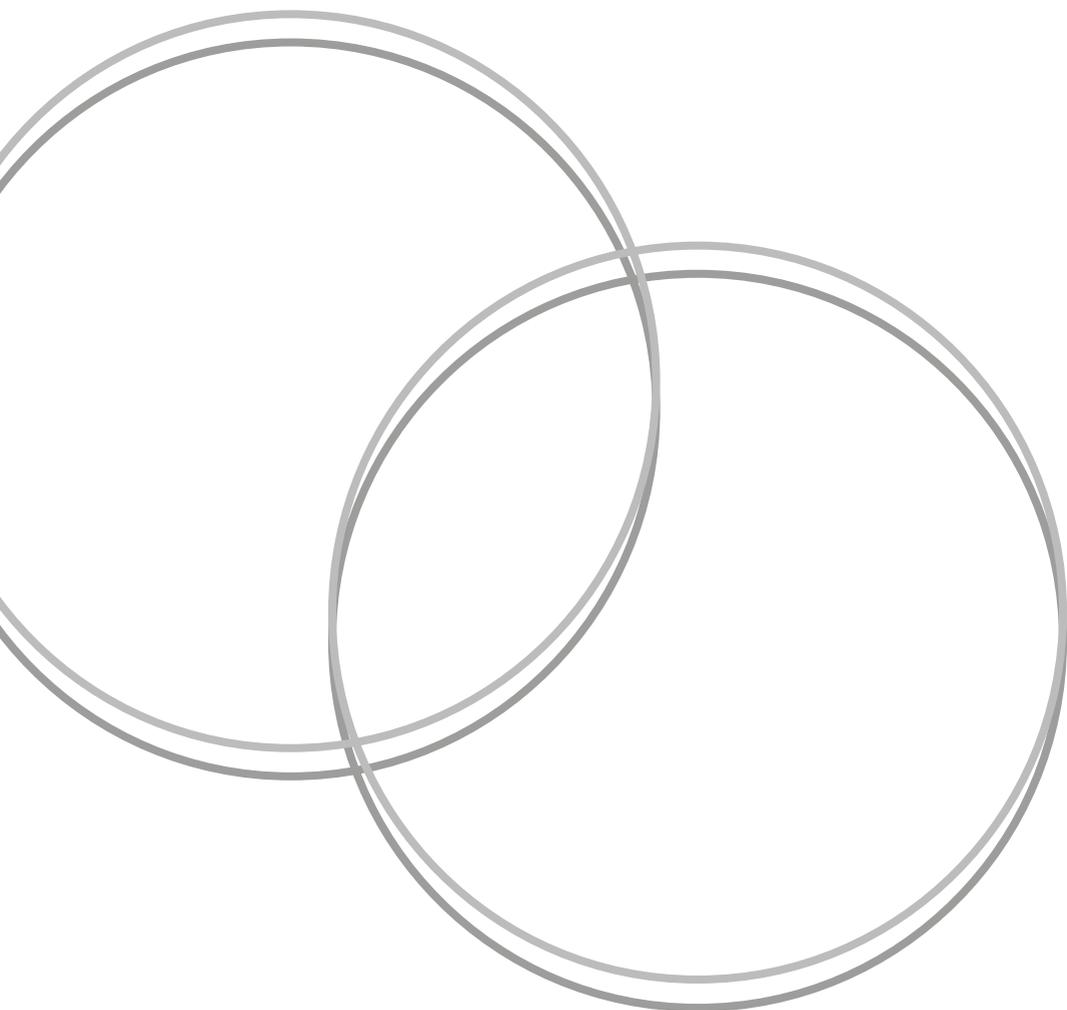




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Adult Cancer Ambulatory Care Unit

Information for patients



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Introduction

This leaflet provides an overview for patients, carers and family members about the ambulatory care service available as part of the Oncology, Haematology and Teenage and Young Adult (TYA) services at the Churchill Hospital.

What is Ambulatory Care (AC)?

In the past, some chemotherapy treatments would require admission to hospital for the whole of that treatment. Ambulatory care is a way of giving you these treatments without admitting you to the ward until you need it. It means that some high-dose chemotherapy treatments, or chemotherapy that is given over several days, can be given to you as a day patient and you don't have to stay in the hospital overnight. At the end of the day, you go home or to the dedicated flat on the hospital site. In some cases, you may continue to receive some of your treatment via a small electronic pump overnight.

What is the Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU)?

The ACU is the unit where people come to spend the day having treatment. It is a four-bedded unit where you can have your treatment during the day. The unit is equipped with comfortable chairs and beds, and it has all the equipment we need to deliver treatment and monitor you.

It is located on Level 1 of the Cancer and Haematology Centre on the Oncology Ward. Turn right at the entrance to the Oncology Ward, and left past the Triage reception desk.

The unit is staffed by experienced chemotherapy nurses with the support of your consultant and registrar.

You can view an introductory video here:

Introduction to ACU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4s5IO6TTyA&t=12s>

Choosing Ambulatory Care

Who is suitable for AC?

Ambulatory care is offered to people having certain types of chemotherapy treatments. Your specialist nurse or consultant will discuss this treatment option with you. Together you can decide whether AC will be suitable for you and your family. You will also have an opportunity to visit the ACU before your treatment begins.

There are a number of things to think about when deciding whether or not you are suitable for AC. These issues are discussed in this leaflet. Your safety and the quality of your care are the most important considerations.

Can I stay at home during my treatment?

Whether you can stay at home will depend on where you live and the type of treatment you will be receiving.

To be considered suitable to stay at home during your treatment, you will need to:

- Be able to drive to the Churchill Hospital within 60 minutes (1 hour).
- Have a mobile phone and be contactable at all times.
- Agree to promptly contact the hospital where there are any problems.
- Agree to return to the hospital if you have any problems with your pump that cannot be resolved over the phone.
- Have good general health and be mobile.
- Have no memory problems.
- Have a family member or friend staying with you at all times. This family member or friend must be available to bring/accompany you to the hospital at any time of day or night during the course of your treatment.

If you live further away, or you do not have someone to drive you, you will need to stay in our on-site flat – see page 6.

Things to think about

It can be useful to consider:

- How do your family feel about it? Would the person caring for you feel comfortable with the responsibility?
- Do you have someone who is relatively fit and able to transport you to hospital by car? What is the journey like to Oxford during peak hours?
- Would you be worried about not having immediate access to the nurses around the clock?
- Would you trust yourself to rest and take care, and not rush about with normal life activities?
- Are you confident that you can manage your medicines by yourself?
- Would you be comfortable taking care of chemotherapy pumps or intravenous tubes at home?

If you live further than one hour away, or you do not have someone to drive you, you will need to stay in our on-site flat. If you are thinking of doing so, you will need to be prepared to share it with one or more other patients. You will also need to consider preparing your own meals if you don't have someone staying in the flat with you. More information about the on-site flat can be found on page 6.

We will give you all the support you need, and you will have access to advice around the clock. However, it is worth considering the difficulties you might face before you decide.

Staying in the patient flat

What is the patient flat like?

If your home is too far away from the hospital, you may be offered accommodation with your carer or companion in a dedicated patient flat.

This is located 10 minutes' walk from ACU on the Churchill Hospital site.

The patient flat has 4 separate en-suite rooms with 1 single bed and one pull-out bed per room. It has a shared kitchen/dining and living area. Your partner or a relative can stay in the bedroom with you. You may be sharing the flat with other patients and their carers.

The flat has good wifi and a shared television.

Cooking, kitchen equipment and a fridge are provided. You will need to supply and prepare your own food whilst staying at the flat, however essentials and light snacks are provided such as tinned soups, bread, milk and butter. You will also be provided with vouchers for the duration of your stay that entitle you to meals from the on-site hospital canteen.

You may enjoy local restaurants and cafes if you wish.

What do I need to bring to the flat?

- A mobile phone and charger
- Light luggage and clothing that can be easily transported to the hospital
- Food, as the flat is self-catering.
- Your usual medications, which can be stored securely.
- No bedding is provided, so you will need to bring a duvet, duvet cover, pillows and pillow-cases.

Is parking provided?

You can use your parking permit to park your vehicle within the patient car parks on hospital grounds whilst undergoing treatment. If you do not already have a parking permit, please inform the team who will arrange one for you.

Unfortunately, temporary flat residents cannot park directly outside the flat. The barrier can be lifted for initial access to drop off any belongings.

Further information on staying in the flat will be provided to you if relevant. You can view a video about the flat here:

Staying in the flat

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pde-CkJ_EqM

You can also find this video using your search engine. Type in '**OUH YouTube ambulatory care**'.

Benefits and risks

What are the benefits of having my treatment in AC?

Ambulatory care offers many advantages compared to inpatient care.

- You would be able to spend more of your time away from the hospital in a more comfortable, private, and relaxed environment allowing you to rest better.
- You would be able to enjoy the food you normally eat more often. This would help you to maintain healthy nutrition.
- You can be more mobile and can exercise more freely outside the hospital, and this can help improve treatment outcomes.
- If you are staying at home, you can sleep in your own bed.
- You can be with your family in the evenings, so family life is not disrupted as much.
- Being away from the immediate hospital environment and experiencing a greater degree of normality can have a positive effect on your physical health and mental well-being.

You would continue to have full access to nursing and medical care.

You would receive the same treatment as on an inpatient ward, except that your hospital attendance will be limited to between the hours of 08.00am and 6.00pm.

If you will need to use the on-site flat some of these benefits will also apply.

What are the risks and responsibilities?

You should carefully consider the responsibilities associated with AC. The nursing team would give instructions on what is required but think about what it will mean to have to do these things for yourself.

- Having treatment at home means that you and your carer would need to take on more responsibility for care and management.
- You need to take responsibility for all of your medicines. Some people find that it is easy to get confused with their medication.
- You would need to take and record your temperatures and sometimes test urine samples.
- There is the risk of developing complications when you are not at the hospital. You would need to be alert to symptoms or signs that need medical advice. We will give you information about this.
- You would need to agree to contact the hospital 24-hour triage line as needed.
- Transport to the hospital is required as you might need someone to drive you to Oxford at short notice or out of hours if you have a problem.
- It is important not to delay contacting the hospital, even if you have an appointment booked on the following day.
- Some people can find the days at the hospital quite long and tiring. This can vary between treatment regimens; some will be more tiring than others and your nurse or doctor can give you further advice on this.

What to do if there's a problem

What happens when ACU is closed?

The ACU closes at 6pm. Your medical and nursing notes are electronic and available for the overnight medical teams to see.

Medical advice is available around the clock via the Haematology/Oncology triage phoneline (**01865 572192**). This provides a quick and direct way to speak to a member of the nursing team.

What if I become unwell during my treatment?

It is essential that you speak to a nurse if you develop any of the following symptoms whilst on the ACU, in the flat or at home:

- **Shivers or hot flushes**
- **Temperature above 37.5°C**
- **Persistent episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulties with breathing**
- **Redness and pain around your central line**

If you have any of these problems:

- Phone Haematology/Oncology Triage on **01865 572192**
- Explain you are receiving treatment in Ambulatory Care
- Explain any specific symptoms you are having or any problems with the pump to the nurse
- If necessary, they will ask you to make your way to ACU, if open, or another specific area for assessment
- If you require full admission to hospital, you will be allocated a bed on the haematology or oncology wards as appropriate.

You should always keep the triage telephone number with you, and keep your mobile phone charged. We will provide you with a leaflet about the risk of infection.

What should I do in an Emergency?

An 'emergency' is any urgent situation where you require immediate medical and nursing assistance.

If you require urgent medical attention:

- Call '999' immediately (even when staying in the patient flat)
- State your symptoms and location
- If you have a carer/companion staying with you, they should also call Triage. Within the opening hours of ACU please also call them instead.

What happens if I change my mind?

Ambulatory care may not suit everyone. If at any time you feel that having your treatment in the ACU is not right for you, please discuss this with your specialist nurse, doctor or the ACU nursing team. We can then make arrangements for you to be admitted to the ward where you can continue your treatment.

Your daily routine

Will I be given an appointment time for my treatment on the ACU?

You will receive a call from the team to advise you of your appointment date and time. You will also get a letter to confirm the details.

If you are going to be staying in our flat, we will send information about this too. You will receive details of all the remaining appointments on the first day you attend for treatment.

The ACU is open between 8am and 6pm and most appointments are scheduled in the morning so that your treatment is completed before 6pm.

What happens each day when I attend for treatment?

Before you have your treatment each day you will:

- have the opportunity to speak to a nurse and/or doctor to discuss any worries or concerns, such as side effects of the treatment and how to manage them
- have your weight, temperature, pulse, respiratory rate and blood pressure recorded and repeated as necessary
- have blood samples taken on some days of your treatment
- have your Hickman line or PICC site assessed and redressed when required.

You will then receive your treatment and any additional infusions such as blood, platelets or extra fluids. You will have the opportunity to discuss your medications with the pharmacist or nursing staff and be given supplies as necessary.

Hot drinks and meals are provided during your time on the unit.

If you are staying in the flat you will need to provide your own food/drink when you are not on the ACU.

Admission to the ward

In some cases, people will have part of their treatment in ACU and be admitted to the ward when they are ready. For example, this is expected for people who are having a stem cell transplant. In some instances, people will return to the ACU for further treatment after they leave the ward.

The ward will be aware that you are a patient in ACU and will expect to admit you to hospital. Your care is carefully planned to ensure that there will be a bed available, and that your admission to hospital will be straightforward and at the right time.

After treatment

What happens when my treatment is finished?

Depending on your treatment you may continue to be seen on the oncology or haematology day unit 2 or 3 times per week.

If this isn't required, an appointment will be made for you to be seen in the appropriate outpatient clinic.

If required, we will organise a district nurse to flush your central line.

We will ensure you have advice on who to contact once you have been discharged with all the appropriate medication.

Further information

For a leaflet about the CADD pump please visit ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets and search for CADD.

We have prepared some YouTube videos to cover different aspects of treatment on the ACU. Click on the following links, or visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/ouhnhs/videos>:

- Introduction to ACU
- Having treatment at home
- Staying in the flat
- Using the CADD pump
- Additional support services

You can also find these videos using your search engine. Type in '**OUH YouTube ambulatory care**'.

Contact us:

Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU):

Tel: **01865 226513**

Triage:

Tel: **01865 572192**

Haematology Ward:

Tel: **01865 235048** or **49**

Oncology Ward:

Tel: **01865 235012**

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: The Haematology Specialist Nurses, Donna Constantine (Ambulatory Pharmacist) and Catriona Gilmour Hamilton, with input from members of the Oxford Blood Group.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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