Your care in the Ambulatory Care Unit

Information for patients

Department of Clinical Haematology
You have been given this leaflet to explain the process of having some of your treatment in the Ambulatory Care Unit. This is on Level 1 of the Oxford Cancer and Haematology Centre at the Churchill Hospital. It is open from Monday to Friday.

**What is Ambulatory Care?**

Ambulatory Care means having part of your treatment as an outpatient, rather than needing to stay in hospital. It involves visiting the Ambulatory Care Unit each day to be assessed and receive your planned care. You can then go home afterwards or to our on-site flat. Your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurses will make this decision with you.

This may reduce your length of stay in hospital during your treatment or may mean you don’t need to stay in hospital at all.

**What are the benefits of having my treatment in the Ambulatory Care Unit?**

- You will be able to stay in your own home or in our on-site flat, with visits to the Ambulatory Care Unit for assessment.
- You will have regular contact with your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurses and your medical team.
- You will have a daily assessment of your condition by your medical and nursing team.
- You will continue to receive full access to expert medical and nursing care 24 hours a day, even though you are not staying in hospital. This would be through our Cancer and Haematology Centre Triage service.
- You will have the reassurance of knowing a bed is available for you if you feel unwell.
Being assessed for the service

Your Consultant and the Chemotherapy Specialist Nurses will assess whether you might be able to receive your treatment in the Ambulatory Care Unit. We will talk with you and your carer about what coming to the Ambulatory Care Unit involves. Some of the things we will discuss will include:

- the type of treatment you are having
- how far away you live from the Churchill Hospital. If you live an hour or more away from the hospital you may be able to stay in our on-site flat.
- if you have a carer who is able to bring you to the Churchill Hospital daily for your treatment and take you home again
- if you have a carer who is able to bring you back to hospital at short notice if necessary
- your general health, fitness and level of mobility (how well you can move yourself around)
- whether you would like to receive your treatment in the Ambulatory Care Unit.

What happens in the Ambulatory Care Unit?

Before your treatment you will be offered the opportunity to visit the Ambulatory Care Unit and meet the Specialist Nursing team.

When your treatment starts, you will need to come to the Ambulatory Care Unit every day.

You will have:

- blood tests and observations (for example, blood pressure and temperature checks)
- daily assessment by the Chemotherapy Specialist Nurses and doctors. This assessment allows us to check whether you need to be admitted to hospital or whether it is safe for you to return home or back to the on-site flat.
• the opportunity to discuss any worries or concerns you may have

• any treatment you may need which is part of your care. For example, chemotherapy, blood transfusions, central line care or intravenous antibiotics.

• assessment of any side effects of treatment you may be experiencing and advice on how to manage these

• infusion of stem cells if you are having a bone marrow transplant. We will review you each day after you have had your stem cell infusion. You will be admitted to the ward if you need hospital treatment or decide you would prefer to stay in hospital.

• Meals and hot drinks provided for you throughout the day.

How can I keep well at home?

During treatment your immune system may be weak. Below are some things you can do to help keep yourself well:

• Check your temperature as directed by your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurse and follow the instructions on the Risk of Infection leaflet. This leaflet is available on the ward and from your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurse.

• Keep up a high level of personal hygiene, e.g. taking regular showers or baths.

• Make sure you carry out regular mouth care (e.g. brushing teeth and using mouth wash) as directed by your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurse.

• Always make sure you and your carers carry out good hand hygiene. Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with antibacterial soap.

• Avoid crowded places and people with signs of a cold.

• Be careful about the foods you eat, to avoid getting an infection from food.

• Avoid being around fresh cut flowers, because of the risk of spores and infection.

• If you have pets, avoid changing cat litter and clearing up after dogs.
What happens if I am unwell at home or in the on-site flat?

Your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurse will make sure you have a thermometer. You will also be given guidance on when and how to check your temperature.

If you are unwell or develop a temperature, you will need to contact the Triage Unit:
Tel: 01865 572 192
(24 hours, 7 days a week)

The Triage team will liaise with the Ambulatory Care Team and arrangements will be made for you to be admitted either to the Haematology Ward or the Oncology Ward.

Each day there will be an allocated bed on the Haematology Ward and Oncology Ward for Ambulatory Care patients. This means that if you are unwell overnight you can be admitted quickly to receive treatment. You can then continue to receive your care as an inpatient on the ward.

What happens if I change my mind?

Before you start your treatment in the Ambulatory Care Unit you will have further opportunity to discuss your plan of care with your doctors and your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurse.

We understand that Ambulatory Care may not suit everyone. If at any time you feel that having your treatment in the Ambulatory Care Unit isn’t right for you, for any reason, please discuss this with your Chemotherapy Specialist Nurse or doctor. We can then make arrangements for you to be admitted to the ward, where we can continue your care as an inpatient.
How to contact us

Chemotherapy Specialist Nurses
Tel: 01865 226 513
Email: acute.chemotherapyteam@oxnet.nhs.uk

Haematology Ward
Tel: 01865 235 048/9

Oncology Ward
Tel: 01865 235 012

Further information

The following leaflets will also be given to you to help prepare you for your treatment:

Welcome to the Oncology Ward
High Dose Treatment and Stem Cell Rescue
Risk of Infection
Irradiated Blood Products
The Triage advice leaflet
Food safety when you are less able to fight infection
Coping with side effects of chemotherapy
Other Useful Numbers

**Macmillan/Cancerbackup**
0808 808 00 00
Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

**Leukaemia Care**
0800 169 6680
Website: www.leukaemiacare.org.uk

**Lymphoma Association**
0808 808 5555
Website: www.lymphoma.org.uk

**Myeloma UK**
0800 980 3332
Website: www.myeloma.org.uk

**Maggie’s Centre**
Churchill Hospital
Old Road
Headington
Oxford
OX3 7LJ
01865 225 690
Website: www.maggiescentres.org
Email: oxford@maggiescentres.org
If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.