

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham



Part of University Hospitals Birmingham  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Your Next Steps

Your at-a-glance guide to Upper GI  
cancer treatment

Delivering the **best** in care

**UHB is a no smoking Trust**

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit  
[www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm)

# What happens?

Your team of healthcare professionals will explain your treatment options. They will make sure you, your family and carers understand what will happen at each stage of your treatment, and when. Your treatment plan will be specific to you and your cancer so you may not have all of the treatments listed below.

## Assessment

At your first clinic appointment you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your general health and medications. You will be seen by a specialist nurse, Consultant Surgeon and other team members as needed. They will assess your fitness, symptoms and send you for further tests as needed.

## Treatment options

Depending on your cancer and general health, there are several options for treatment including chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery or controlling your symptoms without surgery. Your team will review your test results and treatment plan at the weekly UGI multidisciplinary meeting. This is a meeting attended by all the experts involved in your treatment. Your team will then discuss the treatment options with you.

## Surgery

If you're having surgery to remove cancer, it will be performed at University Hospital Birmingham. You will be seen by a Consultant Anaesthetist before your operation to assess your fitness level, discuss the anaesthetic, your preparation for surgery and your recovery.

## Pre and Post-surgery care

Before, during and after your surgery, you will be supported by the specialist nurses, dietitian and physiotherapist to improve your nutrition, general fitness and wellbeing.

# What do the teams do?

## Oncologist

A doctor specialising in chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

## Radiologist

A doctor who will perform your imaging tests including CT scan, endoscopic ultrasonography, PET scan as needed.

## Surgeon

A doctor who will perform surgery including staging laparoscopy, feeding tube insertion, stent insertion, removal of cancer as needed.

## Specialist nurses

These are nurses specially trained in UGI cancer care who will be involved in all stages of your treatment journey.

## Physiotherapist

If you are having surgery to remove your cancer you will be assessed by a physiotherapist who will give you advice on improving your level of fitness.

## Dietitian

Your nutrition will be assessed by a dietitian who will advise you on your requirements and discuss extra nutritional support as needed (supplemental drinks, feeding tubes etc).

## Other healthcare professionals

You may need to see other specialists eg. anaesthetists, social workers, occupational therapists, district nurses, community dietitians.

## End of life care

If treatment is not an option due to the stage of your cancer you will be supported by your team and the specialist palliative care team as needed in your home or a local hospice.

## Useful links

There are a number of useful websites and contacts you can use to find out more about upper GI cancer and your treatment. Here are a few we recommend:

### **Macmillan Charity**

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

### **University Hospital Birmingham**

[www.uhb.nhs.uk](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk)

### **Oesophageal Patients Association**

[www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk)

### **Cancer Research UK**

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

### **NHS UK**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Oesophageal and Gastric Cancer Patient Support Group, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham**

[www.qehb.org/oesophageal-and-gastric-cancer-patient-support-group](http://www.qehb.org/oesophageal-and-gastric-cancer-patient-support-group)

### **Upper GI Blues Patient Support Group, Sandwell and Walsall**

[www.ugiuppergiblues.org](http://www.ugiuppergiblues.org)

# Top tips

- **Stop smoking and reduce alcohol consumption**

- **Food and drink**

It is important to follow advice about eating and drinking from your dietitian. If you have any questions about your diet or weight please speak to your dietitian.

- **Be active**

Being active helps to build your energy levels and reduce the risk of stress and other health problems. You can get more information from your physiotherapy team.

- **Talk to people**

Share your experiences with other people by joining a support group. Communicating and accessing support networks will help you during your recovery. Please speak to your specialist nurse who will give you contact details for your local patient support group.

- **Have questions ready**

Your healthcare team is here to help and support you. Use the space on the back of this leaflet to write any questions you think of. Bring this along to your appointments so you don't forget.

## What is The Way Ahead?

The Way Ahead is a programme designed to support you throughout your upper gastrointestinal (UGI) cancer treatment journey.

## Who will take care of me?

You will be supported by a team of people who work closely together. This means you will get consistent advice from the experts all the way through your investigations, treatment and follow up.

### **You**

All your treatment is tailored to what's best for you.

### **Your GP**

Your upper gastrointestinal (UGI) cancer treatment begins with your GP, who refers you for initial tests – they will also sign you off once your course of treatment is complete. For any questions or problems, talk to your GP.

### **Your local hospital and University Hospital Birmingham**

After your diagnosis, you'll receive your medication and care from your local hospital. Your main surgery will take place at University Hospital Birmingham. This NHS Foundation Trust is a centre of excellence and expertise in UGI cancer. The team at UHB will work closely with your local NHS trust and GP to care for you throughout your treatment.

### **Your family or carers**

Your team of healthcare professionals will support your family and carers.

## Other healthcare professionals

You'll see other healthcare professionals like oncologists, physiotherapists, dietitians, gastroenterologists, surgeons, radiologists, social workers, occupational therapists, anaesthetists, nurses (ward, intensive care, research, pre-assessment and other areas of the hospital) at various stages of your cancer care. These services will be offered at your local hospital, UHB or in the community at various stages of your care. You can contact UHB by calling 0121 371 2000, and asking to be put through to the Upper GI Specialist Nurse extension.

## Specialist nurses

Specialist nurses in UGI cancer give advice about your treatment and provide emotional support.

**Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham:** 0121 371 6650

**Dudley:** 01384 456111 ext 2443

**Walsall:** 01922 721172 ext 7948

**City/Sandwell:** 0121 5072512

## Patient support groups

To support you and your family in all stages of treatment.

