



Bowel Cancer Nurse Led Follow up after surgery

Introduction

This leaflet describes how the Teams at Heartlands, Good hope, Solihull and Queen Elizabeth hospitals will monitor and support you after surgery for bowel cancer. It also explains about any symptoms you should be aware of which may indicate recurrence of the disease and how to access the hospital team.

Initial appointment with Clinical Nurse Specialist

You may have already seen your consultant after your operation to discuss results after your surgery. Your consultant would have discussed with you what tests you will require as part of ongoing surveillance over the next 3-5 years. - **You will require a colonoscopy within a year after your surgery (as indicated). If the initial colonoscopy was not completed or you did not have one before your surgery, a colonoscopy will be arranged within 6 months of your operation (as indicated).** These surveillance tests will be discussed at this appointment with your consultant.

Your Clinical Nurse Specialist will then arrange an appointment in the Outpatients Department usually within a few months after the consultant appointment, to discuss in detail the plan for ongoing surveillance, and you will receive a letter summarising what will happen for your records. At this appointment we will also review any wounds and your overall recovery. **If necessary, a Holistic Need Assessment will be completed and discussed with you. Also we might need to arrange blood test (as indicated).**

Monitoring

Clinical Nurse Specialist will schedule 6 monthly outpatient and telephone appointments for at least three years. If you are fit for further treatment, we will arrange CT scan at 1, 2 and 3 years after your surgery and a colonoscopy at 1 and 4 years (as indicated) to look for any polyps in your bowel as these can turn into cancers over time. Your colonoscopy will be arranged within 1 year **if not done or completed** before your surgery. If there are no polyps you will have this test every 5 years until you reach 75 years old. If polyps are found, they will be removed where possible and your next colonoscopy will be done sooner.

Managing symptoms

Surgery for bowel cancer often results in a change in your bowel function especially surgery in lower bowel which can also affect your bladder or sexual function. We will ask you about these at your appointments and provide advice or offer specialist referral in order to help to improve your function.

Chemotherapy

You may be offered a course of chemotherapy. If so, you will receive an appointment to discuss this with an Oncologist. Chemotherapy is a drug treatment which is offered to reduce the risk of the cancer returning. It is usually given over a 6-month period as an infusion or by tablets. Some people decide against having chemotherapy and continue to be monitored by scans and colonoscopy tests.

Trials

You may be offered the option of entering a cancer research trial. This will involve additional treatment and monitoring compared to the standard treatment we offer. You are not obliged to enter a trial and you will continue to be monitored.

Family history of cancer

A family history bowel cancer is seen in only 25% of those developing the disease within the UK. This is more likely if you are under 50 and family members have a history of bowel or other closely related cancers. You may be referred to the Regional Genetics Service in Birmingham for further checks. After assessing your family history, the genetics service may advise more frequent colonoscopy tests. Family members may also be offered bowel screening by colonoscopy.

Symptoms to be aware of

Being mindful of the signs of possible recurrence is an important part of detection and management through early recognition of symptoms. The risk of recurrence depends largely on the stage and grade of your cancer but more common within the first 2 to 3 years of surgery. Keep your weight down and take exercise if you can as the risk of recurrence is associated with weight gain.

If you have any concerns about the following symptoms between scheduled appointments, you should contact your GP or Keyworker as soon as possible:

- A change in your bowel habit, such as narrow stools or frequent diarrhoea or [constipation](#).
- Blood in the stool, or stools that look like black tar.
- Loss of appetite
- Pain in your abdomen
- Unexplained loss of weight
- Constant feeling of tiredness

If you have an abnormal test it will be reviewed by the bowel cancer team and discussed with you to agree a plan for further management.

Feedback

Clinical Nurse Specialist will be contacting you periodically for feedback to help us review and improve our service. This could be in the form of a letter or text messaging service. Please help us by responding to request for feedback.

University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust:

Colorectal Nurse Specialist Teams (24 hour answerphone)

Heartlands/Solihull Hospitals Telephone: 0121 424 2730

Good Hope Hospital Telephone: 0121 424 7429

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Telephone: 0121 371 4501 Email QE: colorectalnursingcns@uhb.nhs.uk

[Follow us on Twitter @uhbcolorectal](#)

The Patrick Room Cancer Centre

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2TH Telephone: 0121 697 8417

Cancer Information and Support Centre Good Hope Hospital

Rectory Road

Sutton Coldfield B75 7RR Telephone: 0121 424 9486

Health Information Centre Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Bordesley Green
Birmingham B9 5SS Telephone: 0121 424 2280

Further Support:

Local:

Birmingham Cancer Support Centre (Help Harry Help Others): 0121 783 5407;
www.hhho.org.uk
Sutton Cancer Support Centre: 0300 012 0245; www.suttoncancersupport.org
The Holly Trust (Bowel cancer support group): www.hollytrust.org.uk

National:

Bowel cancer UK

Call us on 020 7940 1760. We're open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm
Email us at admin@bowelcanceruk.org.uk

Ileostomy Association

Birmingham branch: 0121 3552745/07842 555070
Email: Mike Jameson mike.jameson@iasupport.org
www.birmingham.iasupport.org

Colostomy UK

Office Tel: 0118 939 1537- Monday- Friday 9-5
Helpline open 24 hours a day: 0800 328 4257
hello@colostomyuk.org
www.colostomyuk.org

Beating Bowel Cancer

Beating Bowel cancer provide medical advice to patients through a specialist nurse advisor line on 08450 719301 or
Email nurse@beatingbowelcancer.org
Website: <http://www.beatingbowelcancer.org/>

Patient Voices

The Patient Voices Group is part of Beating Bowel Cancer and is the only UK national patient-to-patient network for people with bowel cancer.

The group has also expanded to include close relatives of bowel cancer patients. Members of the group are willing to help in a number of ways including patient to patient support, raising awareness, and fundraising.

General enquiries: 08450 719301

Macmillan Benefits

Advisor present

Alternate Tuesdays at Good Hope Hospital Sheldon Unit

Alternate Thursdays at Heartlands Hospital

Macmillan Cancer Line

www.macmillan.org.uk

0808 808 0000

Accessibility

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