

Discharge and follow up advice following major surgery for bowel cancer

Introduction

The following information is provided to assist you in your recovery and explain how we monitor you after your cancer surgery. Please take note of the safety advice about what action to take if you feel unwell after you are discharged from hospital. If you have any other questions or concerns we can be contacted on the telephone numbers provided at the end of the leaflet.

Immediately after hospital discharge

You will usually require an injection of Tinzaparin every day for 28 days after surgery. You will have been taught how to give yourself these injections prior to discharge. This is to reduce the risk of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or pulmonary embolus (PE)

If you had a laparoscopic (keyhole) operation and were able to go home within a few days after your operation, there is still a potential for a serious complication. **If you start to feel increasingly unwell, feverish, vomit profusely or suffer severe abdominal pain you must return to the Surgical Admission Unit (SAU) at the hospital.** You are not advised to visit your GP.

Appointment for results

We will arrange an appointment in the Outpatients' Department usually within a few weeks of your discharge with Clinical Nurse Specialist to discuss the results of your operation and your follow up plan. At this appointment we will also review any wounds and your overall recovery.

Monitoring

The frequency of clinic follow up will be decided on by discussion with your specialist and also your Treatment Summary document will be issued to you, this will give you information on how we plan to follow you up over 3-5 years. This document will also be useful for you to keep abreast of when an investigation is due and chase up if you have not receive an appointment for it.

Typically, we will arrange a CT scan of your abdomen, pelvis and thorax at 1 year and 2 years after your surgery and a colonoscopy at 3 years to look for polyps in your bowel.

If you have not had a colonoscopy to look inside your bowel with a camera prior to surgery we aim to arrange one as soon as possible.

Currently, we will also routinely perform CEA blood tests as part of your follow up and we will write you with the result and act accordingly if we need further information.

Managing symptoms

Surgery for bowel cancer often results in a change in your bowel function. This can be a

particular problem if you have had surgery to the rectum. Also, surgery can affect your bladder or sexual function.

Information for Patients

We will ask you about this at your appointments and provide advice or offer specialist referral in order to help improve things. Please do not be embarrassed to ask about these matters.

Chemotherapy

Depending on the stage of your disease, 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 aimed at reducing the risk of the cancer returning by killing any cancer cells that may be left behind after surgery. It is usually given over a 3- 6 month period as an infusion or by tablets. Your Oncologist will discuss the side effects and benefit of chemotherapy with you.

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 of bowel cancer is seen in 25% of those developing the disease. This is more likely if you are under 50 and other family members have been affected. Occasionally we will refer patients to the Regional Genetics Service in Birmingham for further advice.

Symptoms to be aware of

Being mindful of the signs of possible cancer recurrence is an important part of early detection. The risk of recurrence depends largely on the stage and grade of your cancer and is more common within the first 1-2 years after surgery. Try to maintain a healthy weight and take exercise, if you can, as the risk of recurrence is associated with weight gain. We urge you to try to stop smoking, drink alcohol in moderation and watch out for any changes in your usual bowel function.

If you have any concerns about the following symptoms you should contact your GP or Keyworker (Clinical Nurse Specialist) 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

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: colorectalnursingcns@uhb.nhs.uk

Follow us on Twitter [@uhbcolorectal](https://twitter.com/uhbcolorectal)

The Patrick Room Cancer Centre

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2TH Telephone: 0121 697 8417

Information for Patients

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

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

Information for Patients

Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. If we need to share information that identifies you with other organisations we will ask you for your consent. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Additional Sources of Information:

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

- Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
 - Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946
 - Clinic Entrance Solihull Hospital Tel: 0121 424 5616
- or contact us by email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk

Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you thought of this patient information leaflet, also any suggestions on how you feel we can improve through our feedback link below:

- Patient Information Feedback email:
patientinformationleafletfeedback@heartofengland.nhs.uk

If you wish to make any other comments this can be done through the links listed below:

- Patient Opinion:- www.patientopinion.org.uk
- I want great care:- www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about this hospital or how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the NHS Choice or Patient Opinion sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or treatment, or anything you do not understand or wish to know more about, write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.