

Lady Sobell Gastrointestinal Unit
Wexham Park Hospital

Bowel Cancer – Your Journey

If you need an interpreter, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can arrange for a qualified person to attend your appointments.

Introduction

You have been diagnosed with bowel cancer; from here you are beginning a journey through a multitude of investigations, procedures and treatments. These can be confusing and anxiety provoking for you. This leaflet is designed to try to help you understand what is likely to happen on that journey, giving a general overview; separate information leaflets are available, and will be given to you as and when appropriate, for more detailed explanations.

Key Worker

You will be assigned a 'key worker'; this is usually one of the colorectal specialist nurses. Your key worker will be your main point of contact with the hospital. They are responsible for co-ordinating your care. When you are discharged or your care is transferred your key worker may change. We will let you know when/if this happens.

If you have any questions about key workers, please speak to your Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Contact details for the colorectal specialist nurses

Direct line 01753 633587, email fhft.colorectalteam@nhs.net or you can radiopage them via the hospital switchboard on: 01753 633000.

Pre-Operative Investigations

- FLEXIBLE SIGMOIDOSCOPY – visualises the last part of the large bowel (colon) and rectum. If a likely cancer is found at this investigation, a full colonoscopy will need to be done. Sedation is not usually necessary.
- COLONOSCOPY – this is done to visualise abnormalities within the whole of the large bowel (colon); it can be uncomfortable and sedation is optional.
- CT SCAN – this is done when there is a suspicion of bowel cancer either following consultation or following colonoscopy / flexible sigmoidoscopy
- MRI SCAN – if your cancer is rectal, an MRI scan will be done to 'stage' the tumour prior to undergoing radiotherapy and surgery. On the basis of the MRI scan, a decision might be made on the need for radiotherapy prior to surgery.
- RADIOTHERAPY – if your cancer is rectal, you may need to have a course of radiotherapy; this is often combined with some chemotherapy (CHEMO-RADIOTHERAPY). If this is the case you will have an out patient appointment to see an oncologist to discuss this.
- BLOOD TEST – to enable us to record a baseline, including special 'tumour markers' which will also be monitored post-operatively.

Surgery

If it has been decided that you require surgery, you will see a surgeon at an out patient appointment to discuss this and arrange a mutually suitable date. You will attend 'pre-operative assessment' prior to being admitted to hospital for your operation.

You will be given information specific to your planned operation; this will be in the form of a patient information leaflet.

If it is thought that stoma formation is a possibility, you will be seen by the stoma care team who will fully explain this. A stoma is where the intestine is brought out through the abdomen and faeces passes into a bag. This may be an ileostomy (small intestine) or a colostomy (large intestine) and may be temporary or permanent.

Post-Operative Care

Once you have had your surgery, whatever is removed is sent to the laboratory and a histology report will be completed – usually in seven to ten days. You will be given the result of this either before you leave hospital or at an out patient appointment soon after discharge.

- CHEMOTHERAPY – depending on your histology report, you may or may not require further treatment for your cancer in the form of chemotherapy. If this is the case you will have an out patient appointment to see an oncologist to discuss this.
- SURGICAL OUT PATIENT APPOINTMENT – you will see a member of the surgical team who operated on you within two to four weeks after discharge from hospital. This is to check that your wound is healing and that you are recovering normally.
- NURSE-LED OUT PATIENT APPOINTMENT – following your initial out patient appointment, you will be regularly followed up in the nurse-led clinic for five to seven years. These run alongside the consultant clinics. If you would prefer to see a doctor this can be arranged. If there is need for discussion with a doctor when you attend the nurse-led clinic this is easily arranged at the time.

As part of **routine** follow up regular surveillance is carried out annually as detailed below:

CT SCAN Every year for 5 years	BLOOD TEST Every year for 5 years	COLONOSCOPY Year 1 & year 4 post operatively
---	--	---

The regular surveillance is to check for any recurrence or spread of your cancer or any new polyps or cancers; these are more likely to respond to treatment if found at an early stage. If, however, you experience symptoms such as change in bowel habit, fatigue, weight loss, unusual pain or anything else you are concerned about, you should contact your specialist nurse at the earliest opportunity, they will arrange an appointment to see you or advise otherwise.

Multi Disciplinary Team Meetings

Every week a Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) Meeting is held which is attended by surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, histopathologists, imaging consultants, specialist nurses and palliative care team. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss individual cases and decide on the best course of treatment for each patient. You will have been discussed at one such meeting and are likely to be discussed again following surgery.

Clinic Letters

You are entitled to have a copy of any communication from the hospital consultant to your GP. If you would like a copy of the clinic letter, please inform the clinic nurse at the time of your consultation.

For a translation of this leaflet or for accessing this information in another format:



Please contact (PALS) the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on:

Frimley Park Hospital
Telephone: 01276 526530
Email: fhft.palsfrimleypark@nhs.net

Heatherwood Hospital
Telephone: 01753 633365
Email: fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

Wexham Park Hospital
Telephone: 01753 633365
Email: fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

Frimley Park Hospital	Heatherwood Hospital	Wexham Park Hospital
Portsmouth Road Frimley Surrey GU16 7UJ	London Road Ascot SL5 8AA	Wexham Slough Berkshire SL2 4HL
Hospital switchboard: 01276 604604	Hospital switchboard: 01344 623333	Hospital switchboard: 01753 633000
Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk	Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk	Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk

Title of Leaflet	Bowel Cancer – Your Journey				
Author	Rosemarie Thomas Colorectal Specialist Nurse	Department	Colorectal		
Ref. No	H/035/2	Issue Date	March 2018	Review Date	March 2021

Legal Notice

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible. Please therefore always check specific advice or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

Committed To Excellence

Working Together

Facing The Future