

## Colorectal Department Patient Information



The Information Standard



# Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk)

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Publication Date: 02/16  
Review Date: 02/19

## Supported Self-Managed Follow-up arrangements for patients who have completed treatment for bowel cancer

### Why have you been selected for Supported Self-Managed Follow-up?

You have been selected for the Supported Self-Managed follow up because the colorectal clinical team believe this is the best way of keeping a close eye on your recovery following your cancer treatment. A computerised system allows them to monitor the results of your regular tests and recall you quickly to hospital in the event of any concern. It gives you the freedom to get on with your life, but with the reassurance that there are specialist clinicians monitoring your progress and a fast way back into the hospital should you need it

You will continue to have any recommended CT scans, blood tests and colonoscopies but will only be brought back in to hospital for a consultant appointment if your results show a change which warrants further investigation.

### About Supported Self-Managed Follow-up

There is a special computerised system which the colorectal clinical team use to monitor your test results and to call you back into hospital if they feel you need further tests or investigations. The system records and monitors your test results and alerts the team if there are any changes that need further investigation or treatment. The system is checked on a weekly basis by the Clinical Nurse Specialist.

### The regular tests you will need

Following your treatment for colorectal cancer you will need to have at least two CT scans within the first 3 years following treatment. You may need to have a colonoscopy a year after your surgery and then again at 5 years after surgery. If you did not have a complete colonoscopy prior to your surgery then this may be done sooner. The clinical team will inform you if you need to have a colonoscopy.

You will also have regular blood tests to check carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) level which is a tumour marker for colorectal cancer. These will be taken every 6 months for 3 years following your treatment. Your Colorectal Nurse Specialist or Consultant will explain which tests are recommended for you. You will receive letters to remind you when your tests are due.

## **How Supported Self-Managed Follow-up works**

When your CT scan, colonoscopy or blood test is due, you will receive a letter with either a blood form requesting you to book yourself into your GP surgery for a blood test, or giving you an appointment for a CT scan or Colonoscopy. The results of your blood test, CT scan or colonoscopy will automatically be recorded on the follow-up computer system and will be checked carefully by the relevant clinical staff.

If your results are within the range that is normal for you, you and your GP will receive a letter confirming this and you will be told when your next tests are due. With the Remote Monitoring System you will not be routinely called for a follow-up appointment at the hospital if your results are normal and you are symptom-free.

If there are concerns about your test results you will be telephoned to discuss this and you will receive a letter offering you an appointment to attend clinic within 14 days. Your GP will also be notified.

If your CEA test result shows a rise, please try not to worry. A number of factors can increase the CEA level including smoking, or if you suffer from peptic ulcer disease, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. Your clinical team want to ensure that you stay fit and well so will need to investigate any results which are not normal for you, just in case there is a problem that needs to be resolved. As with all problems, the sooner they are investigated the better the chances of a successful outcome.

## **Supported Self-Managed Follow-up Helpline: 01305 253144**

There is a helpline which you can telephone and leave a message if you have any concerns about your colorectal cancer or are suffering from one or more of the symptoms listed below. The number is 01305 253144. This telephone line is checked daily by the Colorectal Nurse Specialists for messages between 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday and you will be phoned back within two working days of leaving a message. If, as a result of their discussion with you the team feel that you need to return to hospital they will arrange an outpatient appointment for you.

## **Signs and symptoms to report**

Everyone is different and it is you who knows your body best, so we would much rather you telephone the helpline with a concern that turned out to be nothing than have you sitting at home worrying. The sooner you share your symptoms or concerns with us, the quicker we can help to resolve the problem.

The symptoms below could indicate a return or spread of the disease and need further investigation:

- Any rectal bleeding which does not go away. We are not worried about the occasional few spots on the toilet paper, but anything more than this that persists for a few days should be reported
- Any new pains which do not go away and which last for longer than a week
- Unexplained weight loss

If you experience any of the above symptoms, please contact the helpline on 01305 253144. You will be phoned back within two working days of leaving your message. Working days are Monday to Friday 9:00am-5:00pm.

**If your symptoms are particularly worrying, especially in the case of sudden heavy bleeding, or severe and persistent abdominal pain, you should contact your GP immediately or go straight to the hospital Emergency Department.**

### **Benefits of the Supported Self-Managed Follow-up system:**

- You will not have to make unnecessary trips to the hospital at times when you are symptom-free and getting on with your life
- You can phone the helpline with any concerns or symptoms relating to your colorectal cancer and receive a call back within two working days
- You no longer have to take time off from work or pay travelling or parking charges for outpatient appointments that you do not need
- You should receive an improved experience of care, with the advantage of a special helpline you can ring if you have any concerns or symptoms relating to your colorectal cancer

### **Further Information**

If you have any questions about Supported Self-Managed Follow-up, please contact the Colorectal Nurse Specialists on 01305 253144 and they will be happy to answer any questions you have.