

An introduction to the multidisciplinary cancer team

This leaflet explains more about your multidisciplinary cancer team. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is the multidisciplinary cancer team?

We are a specialist cancer care team, working closely with the oncology centres at the Royal Marsden Hospital and other centres of excellence in London.

Follow-up care and treatment may be at St. Georges NHS Foundation Trust, your referring hospital at the Royal Marsden oncology centres, or another specialist centre, depending on your needs. If you think you may be eligible, please ask about hospital transport.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has said cancer treatments should be given in larger hospitals where they are carried out more often. The aim is to have fewer centres carrying out these procedures more often to get the best results for patients.

Who makes up the multidisciplinary cancer team?

The multidisciplinary team includes surgeons, nurses, oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, social workers and counsellors, who all have specialist training and experience in diagnosing and treating cancers. You are likely to meet many different members of the team during your investigations and treatment.

Core members of the team

Depending on the type of cancer you have and how it's treated, you may be seen by some or all of these healthcare professionals:

- **Surgeon** – a doctor who specialises in doing operations
- **Oncologist** – a doctor who specialises in cancer treatments such as chemotherapy (drugs given via infusion in to the vein or oral tablets) or radiotherapy
- **Haematologist** – a doctor who specialises in diagnosing and treating blood disorders, including cancers that start in the blood
- **Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)** – a nurse who specialises in a particular area of health, such as a specific cancer type (see our 'your clinical nurse specialist' leaflet)
- **Therapy radiographer** – an expert in planning and giving radiotherapy
- **Radiologist** – a specialist in x-rays and scans
- **Palliative care doctors and nurses** – specialists in helping relieve symptoms of cancer when it can no longer be cured.

Extended members of the team

You may also be seen by other health or social care professionals who will help prepare you for your treatment or give care or advice during and after treatment. These professionals work closely with the core team members, but might not be at your specialist treatment planning meeting.

- **Stoma care nurse** – to support you in looking after a stoma
- **Physiotherapist** – to help you get back to moving and functioning as well as possible, if you have had any problems with this

- **Occupational therapist** - to help you work out solutions to some of the practical problems of everyday life during or after treatment, such as dressing or getting to the shops
- **Speech and language therapist** – to provide treatment and support for any problems with communication, or with eating, drinking and swallowing
- **Dietitian** – to help with well-being, treating disease and any problems with your diet
- **Counsellor** – to give you a chance to talk about your feelings and any problems in confidence
- **Psychologist** – to work in partnership with you to help you overcome or control any problems by looking at your behaviour, motivations, thoughts and feelings
- **Social worker** – to support you and your family through difficult times and to make sure vulnerable children or adults are safeguarded from harm
- Your **GP** and **GP practice nurse** may also be involved in your treatment and care.

How will the multidisciplinary cancer team work with you?

We will work with you to give recommendations, advice and support during and after treatment.

Your treatment may include investigations, surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy or a combination of these. You will be given specific information and advice to help you make informed decisions about your treatment options. Please ask questions if any part of your treatment plan is not clear.

The team believe your treatment should be individual to you, and should take into account your values and attitudes. We aim to respect your privacy and dignity, and be sensitive and respectful of your religious, spiritual and cultural needs at all times. You will be treated fairly and according to your healthcare needs, regardless of age, disability or sexuality.

If you need an interpreter please ask your team.

What will happen at my appointments with the team?

At your first visit you will normally be seen by the medical team, and / or a nurse practitioner (CNS). Your GP may have done tests already, and we will discuss symptoms and any test results at this appointment.

You may need more tests or investigations to reach the right diagnosis.

When these investigations have been done the team will look at the results at their multidisciplinary meeting (MDM) and will make recommendations for treatment and any further investigations.

You will then have an outpatient appointment to discuss the recommendations and ask any questions. You will also be given some written information.

Your treatment and care will then be discussed at the team's weekly meeting. You can contact the clinical nurse specialists after this meeting to find out the recommended next step for your care. The nurses can't give any test results over the phone, but can talk you through next steps.

We will usually see you following each MDM to discuss the recommendations, your test results and any concerns you may have.

Will I be asked to take part in research?

The team is active in the regional research group, which aims to improve treatment for all cancer patients.

Clinical trials are done to compare treatments, and you will be given information about any trials you may wish to take part in. A clinical trials practitioner can help you make a decision about this.

You may be contacted in the future by the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey or a local audit, to try to get as much feedback as possible to help improve cancer care and meet patient's needs. Please let your medical team know if you would rather not be contacted in this way

Useful sources of information

The Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre

Ground floor, Grosvenor wing, St George's Hospital, open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm.

We offer a quiet space for you to ask questions and talk through any concerns you may have. We have information on all aspects of living with cancer and can help with local sources of support, and with getting in touch with relevant services such as the Macmillan Citizens Advice case worker to address any financial needs.

You can also call us on 020 8725 2677 or email cancer.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

gives advice and support to cancer patients, their families and carers. Specialist nurses provide high quality, up to date information on their **freephone helpline 0808 808 0000**.

Information on all aspects of cancer can also be found on their website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Local support groups

Being more active and getting more exercise will help your general health and wellbeing and reduce the risk of cancer coming back. Your CNS or staff in the Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre can let you know about local activities and exercise classes, such as:

- a free one to one exercise scheme in Wandsworth and the surrounding area
- a therapeutic gardening group
- exercise classes at the Paul's Cancer Support Centre in Battersea
- the Wandsworth Active Lifestyles Programme.

All cancer patients are entitled to free prescriptions, please ask your CNS or GP for an exemption application form.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the contact details given to you by your CNS.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

