

**Patient  
Information**

# Chemotherapy, Haematology and Radiotherapy Clinics

## Information for patients attending Gloucestershire Oncology Centre at Cheltenham General Hospital

### Introduction

This leaflet is intended to give you information on what will happen before you receive your chemotherapy treatment and what will happen on the actual day of your treatment. We hope this leaflet covers all your queries. Please ask any member of staff if you have any questions.

### Clinic information

Before receiving any chemotherapy, you will be given a date to attend a group pre-chemotherapy appointment with one of our nurses. The nurse will give you verbal and written information about the side effects of the drugs and information about the chemotherapy helpline. You are welcome to bring 1 family member or friend to this visit. It is not always easy to remember all the information you may be given and having someone with you may help. **If you have any special needs, please let us know and we will aim to make any adjustments needed to accommodate them.**

If, within 7 days of seeing your consultant, you have not been given a date for your pre-chemotherapy talk appointment, please call on Tel: 0300 422 3366. It is essential that you attend this appointment, as vital information will be given to you about your treatment plan.

Reference No.

**GHPI0569\_12\_15**

Department

**Oncology**

Review due

**December 2018**

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## Transport

It is advisable that you do not drive home after your first visit just in case the treatment we have given you has any side effects. Therefore, please arrange for someone to bring you on this occasion. There are a few treatments for which we give you medication on the day that could affect your concentration for the remainder of the day. We suggest that you do not drive in this instance. Please ask the nurses to clarify if this applies to you.

When you attend the Oncology/Haematology Clinic for your chemotherapy appointment, normally you are free to go home as soon as your treatment has been given. It is to your advantage to have your own transport, as there may be some delay in waiting for other patients that may need to share your return journey.

If you do not have your own transport and require hospital transport to bring you to the clinic, please inform your doctor or nurse so that they can request a booking for transport to be made. Transport is usually available for patients only. If you require a family member or friend to accompany you, please let us know and we will try to arrange this.

Hospital transport is provided by Arriva Transport Solutions. If you find that for future appointments you require transport and it has not been pre-booked, please Tel: 08454 600 6068.

When making your booking you will need to give the following information:

- Registered GP address
- NHS number
- Date of travel, where you are going and name of the department
- Any medical needs, mobility or access issues
- Where you are travelling from and if someone will be accompanying you to and from your appointment.

Appointments can also be made via Arriva Transport Solutions:  
Website: <https://pts.arriva.co.uk>

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## Car parking

Parking is limited at Cheltenham General Hospital, so please allow time to find a parking space. A parking permit is available from the FOCUS Cancer Information and Support Centre, located in the oncology waiting area. This will be issued when you attend the pre-chemotherapy appointment. The parking permit is for use when you are receiving your treatment as an **outpatient** only. There are spaces in the rear car park at the back of the Oncology Centre marked 'Oncology permit parking only' for your use. This car park is entered via the Keynsham Road hospital entrance.

If you are receiving treatment at the Edward Jenner Unit at Gloucester Royal Hospital, parking permits can be obtained from the Edward Jenner Unit. Please ask the nursing staff for further information about this.

## What to do when you arrive

Please ensure that you let the receptionist in the outpatient department know when you arrive. This allows us to make sure that you do not miss your turn and to record the time you arrived.

## 'Two stop' appointments

Most patients will be given two appointments on two different days. One will be to attend the clinic for blood tests and to be assessed by the doctor or nurse practitioner, and the other will be for their chemotherapy treatment. This is known as a 'two stop appointment'. This system is used so that we can have your treatment prepared early on the second visit, to reduce the time that you will need to wait.

## 'One stop' appointment

Patients' having their assessments and receiving shorter treatments on the same day are known as a 'one stop' appointment. In this case an appointment will be issued for you to see the doctor or nurse practitioner first, followed by an appointment for treatment later in the day. Chemotherapy preparation is complex so please accept there may be a small delay. During this time, you may prefer to wait in the relaxing

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environment of the Maggie's Centre (5 minutes from the Oncology Centre). If you decide to do this please remember to inform the clinic staff or receptionist where you are going; so we can contact you on a mobile or telephone Maggie's to inform you that your chemotherapy is ready.

**Blood tests**

We encourage all patients to go to their GP surgery to have their blood taken prior to their chemotherapy appointment. This can reduce the frequency of travelling to the centre and reduce waiting times when you attend clinic to see the doctor or nurse practitioner. If you are being assessed by telephone, it is necessary for you to have your blood taken the day before the doctor or nurse rings you. Please note that the blood must be taken within 72 hours of your chemotherapy appointment. This option will be discussed with you at your pre-chemotherapy appointment.

You will be issued with the appropriate blood test request form to take to your GP practice by your doctor or chemotherapy nurse when you come to the centre for treatment or assessment. If you are not given a form please ask for one.

**Will I see the consultant?**

Although you have been referred to a specific consultant's clinic you may not necessarily see the consultant every time you attend. However, you will be seen by a member of their team or one of our pharmacists.

During your first visit, the doctor will explain your treatment to you and any possible side effects that you may experience, whilst answering any questions you may have.

When you are happy that you have understood the information provided, you will then be asked to sign a consent form provided by the doctor or nurse practitioner.

When you arrive for chemotherapy, you will have an appointment time for when your treatment is due. For patients receiving oral biological therapies you will have an appointment to meet with the pharmacist to discuss your treatment, and then receive your treatment when it has been dispensed. Sometimes

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there may be a delay, as the chemotherapy you are due to receive may need to be prepared. The chemotherapy drugs are prepared in a specialised environment and go through many rigorous checks before they are ready for use. This may take a couple of hours. We will always aim to keep you informed of any delay.

On your first treatment you are welcome to bring a family member, carer or friend to accompany you into the treatment area. Due to limited space and safety reasons we can only allow this on your first treatment, unless there is a specific reason for a carer to remain present. However, there is usually space for them to remain in the waiting room.

### **Why has another patient gone in before me?**

There are many clinics seeing and treating patients. If a patient arrives after you and is called in before you, it does not mean they are jumping the queue. They are probably seeing a different doctor or attending a nurse led clinic.

Occasionally, if a patient is too ill to wait in the waiting room, they may be fast tracked through the clinic; we hope that you will understand this.

### **What happens next?**

When you are called in for your treatment, you will sit in a reclining chair and a specialist nurse will give you your chemotherapy. This could take from 10 minutes to several hours depending on what drugs you are having. Other medications may also be administered at this time to combat any side effects of the drugs. If you are receiving oral treatments, this will be given to you by one of our pharmacists. They will answer any concerns that you have. Normally you are free to go home as soon as your treatment has been given. If you have had intravenous chemotherapy (treatment given into the vein) it is advisable that you do not drive home after your first visit, just in case the drugs give you any side effects. An appointment for your next chemotherapy will be sent to you in the post or a member of staff will telephone you.

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## Mobile Chemotherapy Unit (MCU)

Depending on the chemotherapy you are receiving and the location in which you live, you may be able to receive your chemotherapy treatment on the MCU. The consultant and chemotherapy nurse will consider this service for all patients. The vehicle currently visits Cirencester, Stroud, Tewkesbury and the Forest of Dean. If this is an option which you would like to explore, please ask your consultant or chemotherapy nurse. If you do not live in the above areas but would like to be considered for treatment on the MCU, please ask your doctor or nurse.

For safety reasons your first treatment will always be given at the Chemotherapy Clinic and in some cases a second treatment, before you can use the MCU.

## Clinical trials/Research team

The Gloucestershire Oncology/Haematology Centre supports clinical research and this option may be discussed with you at your appointment. Participation in a clinical trial is entirely voluntary. Clinical research is the way doctors test new and, hopefully better treatments, to make sure they are safe and work well. For some people it could mean trying a new treatment when other treatments have failed.

When the doctor does ask a patient to take part, they will explain everything that it involves. It is then up to the patient whether to take part or not. If they do, they will be asked to sign a form giving their consent. Choosing not to take part in a clinical trial will not affect the level of care a patient receives.

If you would like more information, please speak to your doctor/consultant when you attend, or you may like to contact the research nurses directly at Cheltenham on Tel: 0300 422 3445 (oncology patients) and Gloucester on Tel: 0300 422 6886 for (haematology patients) only.

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Please take your usual medication on the day of your treatment and bring any regular medication with you, such as pain relief and insulin.

You may eat and drink as normal on the day of treatment. There is a 'WRVS' shop available in the oncology department where you can buy drinks and light snacks. There are two other restaurants within the hospital, which you and your family are welcome to use, the Blue Spa café in the main hospital building and the Glasshouse café in St Pauls Wing. At Gloucester Royal Hospital there is Fosters café and a coffee shop in the main outpatient atrium.

If you attend for a two stop appointment, you may be eligible to receive a light lunch, or you are welcome to bring a packed lunch. It is advisable to avoid alcohol on the day of treatment because it may make any side effects from your treatment worse.

There are a team of volunteers who help in the Oncology/Haematology Centre. They will offer you hot and cold drinks when you are receiving your treatment.

You may wish to bring a book or iPod/iPad to help the time pass and maybe a cushion for your personal comfort. You will be responsible for keeping your personal belongings safe at all times.

If you wish to use your mobile phone, please consider the comfort of other patient's whilst doing so.

Due to the toxic nature of the drugs, we do not allow children in the treatment area under any circumstance.

**Chemotherapy Helpline**

The Chemotherapy Helpline is available 24 hours a day and answered by nurses with expert knowledge who provide advice and help if you are feeling unwell or if you have any questions relating to your chemotherapy. Please be aware that at some periods during the day this helpline becomes very busy and so

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your calls may take some time to be answered. **Do not give up; your call will be answered.**

### **Chemotherapy Helpline**

Tel: 0300 422 3444.

**Please note - do not use this number for any other queries.**

### **Radiotherapy**

You may also need to attend the Oncology Centre for radiotherapy. The radiographers in the centre are the staff who will plan and deliver the radiation treatment prescribed by your consultant. After your consultant has referred you for radiotherapy, you will be seen by a radiographer who will explain about your radiotherapy treatment and answer any questions you may have.

### **Prescriptions**

You are now entitled to apply for a prescription charge exemption (already available to the over 60s). Exemption forms can be obtained from pharmacies, GP practices, the FOCUS Cancer Information and Support Centre in the Oncology outpatient area or the nurse specialist co-ordinating your care.

If you are already taking medication, prescribed by your own GP or by another hospital, please bring with you to your first visit. This will allow your consultant to know exactly what medicines you are taking.

Any medications which are prescribed at the Centre must be dispensed by the hospital pharmacy which is near the Link corridor.

### **In-patients**

Lilleybrook and Rendcomb wards accommodate radiotherapy, oncology and haematology patients who need to stay in hospital. Access to the wards is through the Oncology Centre. Access via, and to the treatment suites, is only possible during normal working hours. Information on admission procedures and what to expect as an in-patient is covered in a separate leaflet.

**Patient  
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Tel: 0300 422 4010

**Rendcomb Ward**

Tel: 0300 422 4215

**Follow-up appointment**

At the end of a course of chemotherapy, you will usually be given an appointment to be seen again by the consultant at a follow-up clinic.

**Further Care**

You may feel that you have not had all your questions answered about your illness. Your consultant will want you to know as much about your condition and treatment as you want to know. You may feel that you have not had as much time to talk about things to the doctor as you would like. Time is limited at each consultation, but it may be possible for another member of the team to answer your questions. Within the doctor's team they may have a keyworker. If you do not know who your key worker is please ask. Please do not hesitate in talking to the people who are dealing directly with you, for example the radiographer or the named nurse for the clinic. If they are unable to answer your questions, they will be able to arrange for you, or a family member (with your consent), to have a further meeting with your consultant.

**The FOCUS Cancer Information and Support Centre**

The Focus Cancer Information and Support Centre is located in the Oncology waiting area and is open from Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Please drop in for whatever assistance you may need at any time during your treatment, even if it's just for a chat.

Personal Macmillan Organisers are available from the FOCUS centre. These folders contain a lot of appropriate information.

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Other services available:

- NHS wig clinic, currently held on Tuesdays
- Six free sessions of various complementary therapies
- Monthly 'Look Good...Feel Better' beauty workshops
- A comprehensive selection of seasonal attractive headwear is available at reasonable prices for those suffering from hair loss
- Information relating to travel insurance
- Information about local B&B's
- DVD and book loans
- Greeting cards
- Nearly new paperbacks
- Last but not least, a friendly welcome.

## The Maggie's Centre

Maggie's centre offers support and advice for people, their relatives and friends affected by cancer, in a warm, friendly and inviting atmosphere. The centre is supported by professionals and holds classes, workshops and events free of charge.

You can drop in at any time for advice, a drink, and an informal chat or just simply to make new friends. Open most weekdays from 9:00am to 5:00pm and Saturdays 10:00am to 4:00pm. Maggie's is situated behind Cheltenham General Hospital in College Bath Road, the contact number is at the end of this leaflet.

## Contact information

### Chemotherapy Helpline

Tel: 0300 422 3444

**Please do not use this number for any other queries**

### Chemotherapy appointment enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 3366

### Chemotherapy/Radiotherapy reception

Tel: 0300 422 4028 Tel: 0300 422 4147

### Clinical Trials Nurses

Tel: 0300 422 3445

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**Edward Jenner appointment queries**

Tel: 0300 422 5250

**Linc Outpatients**

Tel: 0300 422 2868

**FOCUS Cancer Information and Support Centre**

Tel: 0300 422 4414

**Maggie's Centre**

Tel: 01242 250611

**Oncology Bed Manager**

To check if a bed is available for inpatient treatment Tel: 0300 422 2222 and ask the operator for bleep number 1457

**Transport queries for Oncology / Radiotherapy patients**

Tel: 0300 422 4028 Tel: 0300 422 4147

Please leave a message if you have no answer and we will return your call as soon as possible.

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