

Patient-initiated follow-up

Information and advice for patients

Gynaecology

This information explains ways in which you can continue to access support and advice about your health now that you have been discharged from hospital follow-up. If you have any concerns or questions that are not answered in this leaflet please speak to your Clinical Nurse Specialist.

What is patient initiated follow-up?

Patient initiated follow-up puts you in control of any further follow-up appointments you have. Instead of being offered regular clinic visits, you can make an appointment to see us if you have any worries or concerns. You will be given 'open access' to the clinic, which means that if you ever feel worried you have a problem that may be related to your previous cancer or treatment, you can contact your clinical nurse specialist or your consultant's secretary, and they will make an appointment for you to be seen.

The reason we offer follow-up this way is because having a regular outpatient follow-up does not help prevent cancer returning or identify any new problems and many patients find the follow-up visits to the hospital cause a lot of anxiety.

Your clinical nurse specialist will also still be available for you to contact for specialist advice, support and information.

Symptoms you should report

The following symptoms may be related to other conditions but if you experience any of them you should arrange a follow-up appointment so that they can be checked.

If you had cancer of the ovaries

- Abdominal (tummy) swelling or persistent bloating
- Change in bowel habits
- Change in appetite
- Vaginal bleeding
- Incontinence of urine or passing urine very frequently
- Abdominal or pelvic pain that does not go away
- Unexplained weight loss

If you had cancer of the womb (uterus) endometrium or cervix:

- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- An offensive-smelling vaginal discharge
- Bleeding after sex

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- Leakage of urine or faeces
- Pelvic, back or bone pain
- Shortness of breath
- Unexplained swelling of either or both legs

If you had cancer of the vulva:

- A new swelling or ulcer in the area previously treated
- New pain that does not go away
- Soreness or severe itching in the area
- A change in the colour or shape of the remaining skin
- New swelling or pain in the groin
- Unexplained swelling of either leg
- Bleeding from the front passage
- Difficulty passing urine or having your bowels open

Your feelings

Everyone will have different feelings when they no longer need to be seen regularly by their medical team. Some women feel relieved that they can now start getting their lives back to normal; others may be concerned about what could happen in the future and are anxious about losing contact with the hospital; most people worry about the cancer coming back. These feelings are all perfectly normal.

Support after your treatment ends

At the end of your treatment, your Clinical Nurse Specialist will arrange for you to attend follow-up sessions. This will include a one to one with your CNS and a group session with women who have had the same diagnosis. It is designed to give you the support and advice you need to become more independent and live your life to the full and is attended by women who all have similar experiences.

Please speak to your Clinical Nurse Specialist for more information.

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The Looking Forward Support Group

The Looking Forward support group meet on a monthly basis at City Hospital. If you are finding it difficult to 'move on' after your treatment you may find attending the group helpful. Your clinical nurse specialist can give you more information about the Looking Forward support group.

Contact details for The Looking Forward Support Group

Jane Hyatt	07891 382 643
Denise Foxall	07970 596 945
Jill Sawford	07791 985 945
Parkash Sohal	07985 562 770

Other support available

Macmillan Cancer Support

0800 808 000

www.macmillan.org.uk

The Courtyard Cancer Centre

(Sandwell General Hospital)

0121 507 3816

Gynae C

01793 491 116

www.gynaec.co.uk

Ovacome

(ovarian cancer support network)

0845 371 0554

www.ovacome.org.uk

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

0808 802 8000

www.jostrust.org.uk

Vulva Awareness Campaign Organisation

www.vaco.co.uk

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Contact details

Macmillan Gynaecology Clinical Nurse Specialist Team

0121 507 5511

Alternatively you can contact the hospital switchboard on 0121 554 3801 and ask them to bleep your nurse:

Julie Winning	Bleep 5795
Yvonne Doyle	Bleep 5036
Jeanette Kilner	Bleep 5294

Gynaecological Oncologists Secretary Team

Professor Luesley	0121 507 5337
Mrs Sundar	0121 507 5337
Mr Nevin	0121 507 5468
Miss Singh	0121 507 5437
Mr Balega	0121 507 4553
Mr Elatter	0121 507 5337
Professor Kehoe	0121 507 5437
Miss Downey	0121 507 4391

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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