

Colorectal Supported Self-Management Follow-up

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

Why have you given me this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet to explain supported self-management follow-up which North Devon District Hospital has put in place for patients who have been treated for colorectal cancer.

What is supported self-management follow-up?

Supported self-management is a new type of follow-up pathway at North Devon District Hospital. It is where routine, clinical examination type appointments are replaced by a system where patients can call us when they have a problem so that they don't have to come to hospital at times when they are feeling well and symptom-free.

Why have you introduced supported self-management?

We have introduced supported self-management follow up as it has been shown to be better for patients. It means that you don't have to make unnecessary trips to the hospital at times when you are feeling perfectly well.

Patients often find traditional clinical appointments are a source of anxiety and can lead to them being tempted to put off reporting worrying signs and symptoms if a routine clinical appointment is 'not too far away.'

Also, it's been proved that new problems are unlikely to be picked up by clinical examination alone. Most are identified by surveillance tests in between routine appointments.

Is North Devon District Hospital the only hospital to have supported self-management follow-up?

No (although in some places it may be called 'patient led follow up'). More and more hospitals across the country are changing the way patients are followed up after treatment for colorectal cancer.

What information will I be given?

In addition to this leaflet, you will have a consultation at the end of your treatment and will be taught about specific symptoms you should report without delay to your colorectal clinical nurse specialist (CNS).

You will also be given written information on:

- Your diagnosis and medication
- The treatment you have had and the possible side effects
- Signs and symptoms to report
- Being aware of changes in your body
- Arrangements for surveillance tests
- How to contact your colorectal CNS
- The process your colorectal CNS will follow if you need to be booked back into clinic at any time in the future

Will I still be able to access the colorectal service if I have concerns?

Yes. You can call the colorectal clinical nurse specialists on **01271 322464** if you have any queries or problems, and we encourage you to do so.

The phone line is monitored between **8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday** and you will be called back by your colorectal CNS by the end of the next working day. If they feel that it would be appropriate for you to come back to clinic to be seen, you will be offered a clinic appointment or, if necessary, an appropriate diagnostic test will be arranged.

Will I continue to have routine tests?

Yes. When you move onto the self-management pathway, you will be given information on the blood tests, colonoscopies and CT scans that you will require for at least five years after your diagnosis. Your CNS will make you aware of how results of the tests will be communicated to you. If you do not receive a request for the routine test by the end of the month in which it is due, please contact the specialist team on the contact details above.

Standard colorectal surveillance test schedule:

- **CEA blood tests:** every six months for three years, then annually for two years
- **CT scan, or other appropriate imaging (chest, abdomen and pelvis):** the first at one year, and the second at 2.5 years
- **Colonoscopy:** at one and three years (year four) following operation, and then repeated every five years until the age of 75. After 75, you may be offered a qFIT test at intervals of five and ten years after your last colonoscopy.

After my treatment is completed

At the end of your treatment, you will have a special consultation with your doctor or colorectal CNS, called 'end of treatment summary'. During this appointment, you will be taught the signs and symptoms that you need to watch out for and you will be given the direct telephone number on which you can contact the clinician with any symptoms or concerns.

If you need to ring this number, please leave a short message including your name, NHS number and telephone number on the answerphone. This is checked regularly from Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 4.30pm and you will be telephoned by the colorectal CNS by the end of the next working day.

Your colorectal CNS will talk through your symptoms or concerns with you and decide with you whether you need to be brought back into clinic, or have any further diagnostic tests. If necessary, you will be offered a clinic appointment within 14 days of telephoning.

Alternatively, you can contact your consultant surgeon's secretary via the hospital switchboard on 01271 322577.

Further information

Colorectal clinical nurse specialists – 01271 322464

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, their relatives, carers and friends, answers questions, and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 4JB
Tel. 01271 322577
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

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Email: ndht.contactus@nhs.net