Chemotherapy services at Queen Mary’s Hospital

We provide chemotherapy treatment at Queen Mary’s Hospital, Sidcup, so local people can be treated closer to where they live.

This leaflet aims to give you an overview of chemotherapy services at Queen Mary’s. Chemotherapy care is a nurse-led service and is provided in the cancer day unit at Queen Mary’s.

If you have any questions that this leaflet does not answer, please speak to a member of your nursing team.

Visiting the oncology outpatient department at Guy’s Hospital

Before each chemotherapy treatment at Queen Mary’s, you will visit the oncology outpatient department at Guy’s Hospital for an assessment. This takes place a few days before your chemotherapy session. At the assessment you will:

1. **See your clinical team** – they will assess whether you are well enough to have chemotherapy. You will be asked how you are feeling and about any side effects your treatment may be causing. Sometimes it is helpful to make a list of your side effects in advance along with any questions you would like to ask before coming to your appointment. If you require any prescription medications relating to your chemotherapy please ask at this appointment.

2. **Have a blood test** – chemotherapy can affect healthy blood cells as well as cancer cells, so it is important to make sure you have enough healthy blood cells before having more treatment. When having your blood test please take a ticket from the dispenser at the front of the department and wait until your number is displayed on the electronic sign.

3. **Be weighed** – weight changes are common during chemotherapy. We monitor your weight so that we know if it is changing. It also helps your clinical team make sure they give you the correct amount (dose) of chemotherapy.

If you’ve been told that you are likely to have a physical examination, make sure you wear separates (top and trousers/skirt). This is so that you do not have to take all your clothes off for the examination. If you need to have a physical examination, a chaperone will be present. If not, please ask for one.

Your chemotherapy prescription

Chemotherapy is tailor-made for you. Your chemotherapy dose is worked out by your height and weight at the beginning of treatment. We will monitor your weight throughout your chemotherapy treatment so that you continue to get the right dose.
Depending on your blood test results and your assessment, your clinical team may need to adjust the doses of your drugs to find the right level of treatment for you. **All chemotherapy doses are checked by trained pharmacists before being supplied to the nurses.**

**Visiting the cancer day unit at Queen Mary’s Hospital**

It is very important that if you feel unwell on the day of your treatment that you do not **attend your chemotherapy session**. If this is the case, please contact the acute oncology service at Guy’s Hospital, so they can arrange a review by your clinical team – contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

The cancer day unit is located in junction 2, level 2, B block (Cray Ward). When you arrive please report to reception and hand in your appointment card. Arriving early to your appointment will not mean that you will have your chemotherapy earlier as all appointments are carefully allocated to ensure that a chair is free and that a nurse is available to treat you.

Visits to the unit can be lengthy. The chemotherapy nurses let you know how long your treatment is likely to take. Please remember that there can occasionally be unavoidable delays which may mean that your treatment takes longer.

There is tea, coffee and biscuits provided and there is a small shop on site selling sandwiches and snacks. Please bring food and drinks with you if you have particular requirements.

**Getting to Queen Mary’s – travel, parking and visiting information**

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<tr>
<th>Address: Queen Mary's Hospital</th>
<th>Opening times: The cancer day unit is open 9am to 4:30pm, Wednesdays and Fridays.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frognal Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA14 6LT</td>
<td>t: 020 8302 2678</td>
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**Arriving by bus:**
You can catch any of the following buses from the local area: 160, 229, 269, 286, B14, R11.

**Arriving by train:**
Trains travel regularly to Sidcup station from London Charing Cross, London Bridge, Waterloo East, Cannon Street and New Cross as well as Dartford, Gravesend, Slade Green and Crayford. The hospital is about 25 minutes walk from Sidcup station or you can take a bus or taxi – buses 160, 229 and 286 run between the hospital grounds and the train station.

**Arriving by car:**
Queen Mary’s Hospital has 350 pay and display public parking spaces with bays for people with disabilities outside each main building. There is a paved area for motorcycles and cycle racks near C Block. **Parking charges apply.**
If you become unwell while having your treatment
On rare occasions some people may have a reaction to the chemotherapy or a problem with the infusion. If this happens the chemotherapy nurses will take immediate action to resolve the issue. They will arrange for you to be transferred either to Guy’s Hospital for a review by your clinical team or to A&E if you need attention more urgently.

Before you go home
Your chemotherapy nurse will give you any medications your team have prescribed for you, and will explain how and when you should take them. These include anti-sickness medications. If necessary, the receptionist will book your next review with the doctor and your next treatment appointments.

What if I become unwell after chemotherapy?
The acute oncology service is available at Guy’s Hospital for patients to seek advice if they become unwell, develop symptoms or experience any problems after having chemotherapy.

The service operates between 8.30am and 6.30pm, Monday–Friday. To use this service, please contact 020 7188 3754. A specially trained nurse will answer your call, assess your concern and advise you on what to do.

If you feel unwell outside of these hours, please call the Guy’s Hospital switchboard on 020 7188 7188 and ask for the operator. This is a voice activated system. When you are talking to the operator, please ask them to contact the oncology registrar on-call.
Patient tips
The following top tips have been put together by patients having chemotherapy:

Eating and drinking
- Don’t have your favourite meal on the day of treatment – some chemotherapy drugs can make food taste different.
- Do have meals in the freezer or ready meals that don’t require any effort if you will be alone.
- Eat little and often, rather than having three or four bigger meals.
- Always carry a couple of small snacks you really like with you.
- When treatment finishes your normal taste will most likely come back but it may take weeks or even months. Don’t worry about it – just eat whatever you can.

Managing side effects
- Wear comfortable shoes. Some chemotherapy makes your hands and feet very sensitive, and you may find that you need a larger size in shoes or something with a thicker sole or with insoles if you are going to walk over rough ground.
- A dry mouth can be helped by chewing sugar-free gum. A ginger and lemon drink can freshen a dry mouth, but miss out the lemon if your mouth is sore.
- If you get mouth ulcers, an alcohol-free mouthwash can really help and can be prescribed for you.
- Take the anti-sickness drugs as directed. Take them before you are sick, as they can prevent the sickness altogether. If the first anti-sickness drug you are given doesn’t help, call the acute oncology service at Guy’s Hospital and an alternative can be given.
- Yes, chemotherapy can affect your memory. It’s not you! Write yourself reminders, ask people to repeat themselves if you’ve forgotten already, and make lists, lists and more lists!

Activity and rest
- Bring your own entertainment with you when you come for your treatment. A book, a magazine, a newspaper, puzzles, an iPod if you have one, will all help the time to pass more quickly. You could load your iPod with talking books as well as music, for those times when even reading is too much effort.
- Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided but it is nice to bring food with you that you know you can manage and enjoy.
- Get used to asking other people to do some things for you, and when you’re feeling better, the habit might have stuck – for them as well as you!
- Try to get out and walk every day. You’ll feel more positive and energised and in contact with the normal world outside.
• Plan some nice activities, but rest well before and after – don’t feel guilty about having an afternoon nap!

General tips
• If you don't know, always ask. Whatever it is, there’s lots of help and information around.
• Try to arrange treats for yourself in between treatments so there is always something to look forward to.
• You may want to ‘put on a brave face’ to loved ones, but it's good to have one person (a good friend or a counsellor) to whom you can be really honest.
• Everything will hopefully get back to normal after your treatment ends but don’t expect too much from yourself, especially at first.
• Remember that everyone is different – and no cancer patient is the same. Your experience of cancer will be unique to you and your reaction to the treatments will not be the same as anyone else’s.

Contact us
To contact the cancer day unit at Queen Mary’s, call 020 8302 2678, 9am-4.30pm, Wednesdays and Fridays.

If you’re felling unwell or experience any problems after chemotherapy, contact the acute oncology service at Guy’s Hospital on 020 7188 3754.

Outside of these hours, please call our main switchboard on 020 7188 7188 and ask to speak to the oncology registrar on-call.

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

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
\textit{t:} 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust’s services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:
\textit{t:} 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas’ \quad \textit{t:} 020 7188 8803 at Guy’s \quad \textit{e:} pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.
\textit{t:} 020 7188 8815 \quad \textit{fax:} 020 7188 5953
NHS 111
Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.
t: 111

NHS Choices
Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.
w: www.nhs.uk

Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future
Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:
t: 0848 143 4017  e: members@gstt.nhs.uk  w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk