

The Sickle Day Unit – Pain management and support for patients

This leaflet gives you information about the nurse-led service at Guy's Hospital for the treatment of painful sickle cell episodes (also known as painful crises). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the sickle cell nurses (numbers on page 4).

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Opening hours

The pain management service is open 9am-4pm Monday to Friday. Patients who are already on the day unit before 4pm and need treatment will remain on the day unit until they are well enough to be discharged. Patients who need treatment outside of the stipulated hours should go to A&E at St Thomas' Hospital.

Where to find us

Department of Haematology, 4th Floor, Southwark Wing, Guy's Hospital

How does the day unit work?

The day unit is a drop-in service where you can get your pain brought under control with painkillers that are stronger than those you have tried at home. This may be oral medication or an injection, depending on what you usually have for your pain.

Only patients already known to the service at Guy's & St Thomas' and who have been reviewed in clinic in the last two years can access the service.

It is important that you call the advanced nurse practitioners or the clinical nurse specialist before coming to the day unit (the phone numbers are given over the page). This is so we can best plan the treatment you will need and help to avoid delays when you arrive at the unit.

Who to call first:

- **Mr Neil Westerdale, Advanced Nurse Practitioner**
t: 07770 683947 (mob)
bleep: 1843 (via switchboard)
- **Luhanga Musumadi, Advanced Nurse Specialist (Adolescents)**
t: 07770 678851 (mob)
bleep: 2256 (via switchboard)
- **Mrs Judith St Hilaire, Clinical Nurse Specialist**
t: 07920 711266 (mob)
bleep: 2868 (via switchboard)

Switchboard: 020 7188 7188

What happens when I come to the day unit?

- On arrival you will be seen and assessed by a nurse.
- We will prescribe and give you painkillers and fluids (if required). If the pain settles you can then go home. However, if the pain persists you will receive further painkillers
- Your blood pressure, temperature, pulse, respirations and oxygen levels will be monitored.

When should I come to the day unit rather than A&E?

You should come to the day unit if you have an **acute** painful crisis that you have not been able to control in despite taking 2-3 consecutive doses of your usual painkillers at home over the past 24 hours.

When should I go to A&E?

You should go directly to A&E if any of the following apply:

- you have a high temperature
- you have chest pain with shortness of breath
- you are pregnant
- your pain does not feel like your usual sickle crisis
- you have weakness affecting your limbs.

What other services will the day unit provide?

The day unit also provides:

- planned blood transfusion:
 - top-up transfusion
 - exchange transfusion
- health psychology; you will be able to see a psychologist for assessment and further follow-up can be arranged as necessary
- consultant-led outpatient sickle clinics, held twice weekly, for your normal regular follow-ups.

Going home

- You will be given a small supply of painkillers to take home with you to make sure that you are comfortable at home.
- Continue to take your painkillers at home as needed. Make sure you follow the instructions given to you.
- If your pain worsens once you have left the unit, you may return to A&E to be reassessed, or return to the day unit the following day (9am-3 pm). Please speak to one of the sickle cell nurses before returning to the day unit.
- You may find it helpful to talk with our health psychologist for support on developing effective coping strategies, which are often of great benefit to many patients. Speak to your nurse caring for you during the course of your treatment on the day unit to arrange this.
- If you have received taken any opiate painkillers such as morphine (eg Oramorph[®]), then you are at risk of sedation and drowsiness and are strongly advised not to drive. Please plan ahead and talk to the nurses to help to arrange for someone to collect you before 5.30pm.
- If your pain does not settle to allow you to go home, you may need to be admitted to a ward. This will be discussed with you as soon as possible.
- Your GP will be informed of your attendance.

To avoid delays in your treatment, please phone us before coming in.

Notes

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Contact details

For more information about the Sickle Day Unit, please speak to the sickle cell specialist nurse.

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.

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:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **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.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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

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