

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.

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Opening hours

The pain management service is open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Patients who need treatment outside of the stipulated hours should go to the Emergency Department (A&E) at St Thomas'.

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 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.

The service can be accessed by dialling the day unit directly on telephone number **t:** 020 7188 3615.

This line is open from 9am and will be answered by one of the day unit nurses. They will ask you a few questions and if it is appropriate that you are seen on the day unit, you will be asked to attend.

It is important that you call before coming to the day unit so the nurses can organise your bed and plan your treatment, to minimise delays when you arrive at the unit.

It is **not** advised to turn up without phoning through, as there is a risk that the day unit may not be able to accommodate you and you may be asked to attend the Emergency Department at St Thomas'.

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 the Emergency Department?

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

When should I go to the Emergency Department?

You should go directly to the Emergency Department if any of the following apply:

- you have a high temperature
- you have chest pain or 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 does the day unit provide?

The day unit also provides:

- planned blood transfusion
 - top-up transfusion
 - exchange transfusion
- health psychology; you will be able to be referred 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

- Continue to take your usual 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 are advised to attend the Emergency Department to be reassessed, or return to the day unit the following day, following the same procedure above.
- 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 advised not to drive. **Please plan ahead and arrange for someone to collect you when you are able to leave.**
- If your pain worsens or you develop other complications and require admission, this will be discussed with you as soon as possible.
- Your GP will be informed of your attendance.

Contact details

Haematology Day Unit Pain Service line

t: 020 7188 3615

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 **w:** 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, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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