

Head and Neck Cancer Multi-Disciplinary Team

Patient Information

Oncology Department

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Your Healthcare Team

Diagnosis and treatment of cancer requires a team of experts called a Multi-Disciplinary Team (or MDT for short). The team is made up of people with different skills and training, who are all cancer experts. The team includes specialists who understand how cancers appear, what they look like, how they behave, what cancer cells look like under the microscope, how and when to test for cancer, how to treat it and how it may affect your life. There are lots of people in the MDT. All of them play a part in supporting you and your family during and after your treatment.

You come first

To make sure you are the one who benefits, everyone in the MDT meets on a regular basis. Your case will be discussed to ensure that all appropriate choices of treatment for you are considered. When you have choices they will be explained to you and verbal and written information will be available to you to support any decision that you are making.

Some of the team that you may come into contact with may include the following:

The Head and Neck Surgeon

The surgeon is a specialist who can assess Head and Neck problems and diagnose primary and recurrent Head and Neck cancers. Once your condition has been diagnosed the surgeon will discuss different options for treatment and carry out any operations needed to remove the cancer. They will play an active role in MDT in deciding the best and most appropriate treatment for you.

The Registrar

This is a senior doctor working under the Consultant, who has chosen to specialise in this area of care.

The Radiologist

This is a doctor who is specially trained to interpret X-rays and special scans from which a diagnosis is made.

The Head and Neck Nurse Specialist

This nurse specialises in the care and support of people with Head and Neck cancer problems. The Head and Neck nurse will provide information to help you understand your condition and support you during your future treatment. They will advise you on practical issues and help with problems associated with your condition and will guide you through your continuing follow up care.

The Pathologist

This doctor is an expert at looking at cells under a microscope to determine if it is cancer, and if so the type of cancer.

The Oncologist

This doctor is an expert on non-surgical treatments for your type of cancer. A clinical oncologist specialises in radiotherapy but may also have experience in chemotherapy and hormone therapy. A medical oncologist specialises in chemotherapy and hormone therapy.

Speech and Language Therapist

This is a therapist who specialises in the assessment and treatment of communication and/or swallowing problems.

The Dietitian

A Dietitian is uniquely qualified to translate scientific information about food into practical dietary advice. The Dietitian can provide you with support and advice on how to maintain a good diet whilst coping with the after-effects of treatment.

Do you have any questions?

If you are worried about something or don't understand something you have heard, your Specialist Nurse is there to help. A Specialist Nurse is available from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday and can be contacted on 07825 722353/07748 982126 or via switchboard on 01942 244000.

Additional Information

At some point during your treatment, you may need to visit the Cancer Treatment Centre at the Christie Hospital in Manchester. If this is the case everything will be explained to you at that time.

MDT Meetings

Head and Neck MDT meetings are held every Tuesday morning at The Christie hospital, Manchester.

Maxillo Facial MDT meetings are held every Thursday morning at Manchester Royal Infirmary.

Thyroid MDT meetings are held on alternate Thursday afternoons at The Christie hospital, Manchester.

Other information

Cancer Backup: www.cancerbackup.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Relief: www.macmillan.org.uk

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: <https://www.wwl.nhs.uk>

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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