Your guide to anti-cancer therapy services

Information for patients
Weston Park Cancer Centre
Our commitment to you

All the staff at Weston Park Hospital are committed to providing a high-quality service to patients and their families.

We are continually trying to improve what we offer, with the aim of providing a patient-centred service.

You can help us by letting us know of any changes you feel we could make to improve the service or facilities by contacting the Clinical Governance Co-ordinator on:

- **0114 226 5563**

You can also speak to the nurse who is looking after you when you attend for your treatment.
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Help us to help you

We want to make sure your visit goes smoothly, so please let us know if you have any special needs before you come into hospital.

Help for people who need an interpreter

If you do not speak English and need to have an interpreter for your appointment, please ask someone who speaks English to telephone the department you are visiting and they will carry out an assessment of your language needs. This telephone number should be on your appointment letter.

Most interpreting is now done via the telephone in the clinic. Only in exceptional circumstances will we offer a face to face interpreter.

Help for people with a hearing impairment

Most areas in the hospital have portable loop systems available. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to use the system.

We are also able to arrange for sign language interpreters. If you need one please let the staff at the clinic know and they will arrange this for you.

Information in other formats

If necessary, patient information can be made available in alternative formats. This is only done on request but can include Braille, large print, audio, electronically and in other languages.

For further details speak to a member of staff or email: sth.AlternativeFormats@nhs.net
Introduction

Your doctor has recommended that you have systemic anti-cancer therapy. This is the name used for treatments including chemotherapy, immunotherapy or other types of anti-cancer treatment given by injection, intravenous infusion (drip), tablets or capsules. Anti-cancer therapy can be given in different locations. Sometimes it can be given at your local hospital. This will depend on a number of factors including the type of treatment you will be receiving. Your doctor will discuss your treatment location with you. If you have any questions about this, please raise them at your outpatient appointment.

This leaflet tells you what to expect when you attend for your treatment at Weston Park hospital.

Where will I have my treatments?

We will either send you an appointment through the post or you will be given one in the outpatient clinic. When you get your appointment it will say which department or ward to go to. It will be one of the following:

- Outpatient Department
- Day Case Unit (first floor)
- Cancer Research Unit (CRU) - you may attend CRU if you are having treatment on a clinical trial
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- Teenage Cancer Unit
What will happen at my outpatient clinic visit?

At your first visit you will be seen in the clinic by a doctor. At your following appointments you may be seen by a doctor, a specially trained nurse or pharmacist. You might not see your consultant each time.

- The doctor will explain your treatment. We must seek your consent for your treatment beforehand. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of your treatment, please ask for more information. You will be given time to ask questions and discuss the treatment available. You will need to sign a consent form before you start your treatment.

- At this visit we will weigh you and measure your height. This information is needed to work out your dose of treatment.

- You may also need to be sent for other tests, for example an x-ray.

- You need to have a blood test before anti-cancer therapy. This can be done before your appointment or on the day of your outpatient visit. The doctor or nurses will discuss this with you.

- If you have a blood test on the day of your appointment the receptionist in outpatients will tell you where to go for this. It may take up to two hours to get your result as this is done at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital.

- The doctor will check your blood test results. If the results are correct your doctor will write your treatment prescription which will be sent to pharmacy. If your blood results are low you will return on another day and have a further blood test before your treatment.
• When you are due your treatment, the pharmacy department will check your prescription and prepare the treatment drugs. See page 11 for more information about how your anti-cancer therapy is made.

You may wish to bring a friend or relative with you when you come for your clinic or treatment visit. Due to the limited space in clinic and treatment areas we ask that only one person comes with you where this is possible. Please remember that if your visit is for treatment, your friend or relative could be here for some time.

**Why do I need to have a blood test before anti-cancer therapy?**

There are a number of reasons why you may need a blood test before anti-cancer therapy.

**Some treatments can affect the production of blood cells in your body.** There are three different types of cells in your blood - red cells, white cells and platelets. If you are short of red cells you can become anaemic. If you are short of white cells you are less able to fight infection. If you are short of platelets you are more likely to have a problem with bruising and bleeding. The number of cells in your blood will return to the usual level after a short amount of time. It is important that the level is high enough before you receive your next treatment. This is why you need a blood test if you are having treatment that affects your production of blood cells.

**Some treatments can only be given when we know that your body can cope with them.** This means that we may need to make sure that organs such as the kidney and/or liver are working normally. This can be assessed using a blood test and you may need a blood test before treatment for this reason.
If you require a repeat blood test on the day that you come for your treatment, it may take some time and you can expect to be at the hospital for most of the day.

What will happen when I attend for anti-cancer therapy treatment?

Day Case outpatient treatment

If you are receiving your treatment as a day case at Weston Park Hospital, you will be required to attend for two visits. One is the clinic visit to see the doctor and the other is for a separate treatment visit on a different day. Treatment appointment times can be between 7.30am and 6.00pm.

If your outpatient or treatment appointment falls over a bank holiday period, the day you are seen and treated may be moved. We may provide treatments on a Saturday in a Bank Holiday period.

The time of your appointment will depend on how long it takes to give your treatment and the availability of appointments.

- Day case anti-cancer therapy is given in the day case unit on the 1st floor at Weston Park Hospital. It can also be given in the clinical trials unit. This is also on the 1st floor.
- Before you have your treatment a nurse will explain it to you. Please ask any questions or raise any concerns you might have.
- On leaving the unit please ensure that you have your next clinic and treatment appointments.
Inpatient anti-cancer therapy on a ward

Patients who stay overnight for treatment will be admitted to a ward at Weston Park Hospital.

- When you arrive on the ward the nurse will show you to your bed. If the bed is not ready we will ask you to wait in the day room.
- A nurse will check your details with you. You will see the doctor shortly after you arrive. The nurse will also explain your treatment to you. Please ask any questions or raise any concerns you might have.
- You might also need other tests such as an X-ray. This will be arranged for you.
- When it is ready, your treatment will be sent to the ward.
- On leaving the ward please ensure that you have a follow-up appointment for your next treatment or to attend clinic.

How is anti-cancer therapy given?

Anti-cancer therapy can be given in different ways. It can be given as an oral treatment, for example as tablets. It can also be given as a fluid into the vein. This is called intravenous treatment. Some treatments can have both oral and intravenous medicines.

Intravenous anti-cancer therapy can be made in a syringe or an infusion bag. It can be given through a thin plastic tube which is put into the vein. This is called a cannula. It can also be given through a PICC line or a Hickman line. These are thin tubes that are placed in larger veins. These lines can be left in place for a few months. If you need to have a PICC line or a Hickman line to receive your treatment, the doctor or nurse will explain this to you. If you would like more information about PICC or Hickman lines please ask the nurse or doctor.
The length of time it takes to give your intravenous anti-cancer therapy will depend on the treatment you are having. Some treatments take less than an hour. Some treatments can take many hours or days. You will be told how long it will take to give yours before you come for treatment.

**What are the side effects of my anti-cancer therapy?**

The side effects vary depending on the treatment being given. Your doctor will explain the side effects to you at your clinic appointment when you discuss your treatment. You can also talk about them with the nurse who will explain your treatment to you.

You will be given information leaflets that tell you about the side effects of treatment and what you can do if they occur.

**Will my treatment be painful?**

The treatment is normally pain free. However, if you are having intravenous anti-cancer therapy and feel any pain or notice any swelling or redness around the area where the treatment is being given, please tell the nurse looking after you straight away.

**Pharmacy**

Some medicines could be harmful to take when you are having anti-cancer treatment. This includes some tablets that do not need to be prescribed by a doctor, for example aspirin, vitamin tablets and herbal or homeopathic remedies.

Please bring all of the current medicines that you are taking to your appointment or if you are being admitted to the ward. This includes over-the-counter, herbal or alternative medicines. Please bring them in their original packaging. This will help us to make sure that you are prescribed drugs and/or treatments that you can have safely with your
current medicine. If you give your consent we can access your GP medicines record to confirm your medication history.

If you need to collect a prescription, the pharmacy department is on the 1st floor. Please note that cancer patients are exempt from prescription charges. Please see pharmacy for details.

If you are on oral anti-cancer medicines they will be dispensed by Boots the chemist after your first course of treatment. They can be collected from the Boots pharmacy at the Royal Hallamshire hospital or you can arrange to collect them from a Boots the chemist near to where you live. Boots can also arrange to have them delivered to your home. Please ask in pharmacy at Weston Park Hospital for further details.

**How is my anti-cancer therapy made?**

Anti-cancer therapy is made by a highly specialist pharmacy team who are based on the 6th floor in Weston Park Hospital. We prepare treatment for administration by injection and infusion.

At Weston Park we make treatments for patients to receive on the Day Case Unit, as an in-patient on one of our wards and for those patients receiving treatment as part of a clinical trial. We also prepare and dispense anti-cancer therapy for haematology patients based at The Royal Hallamshire Hospital.

On average we process approximately 25,000 individual doses of treatment per year for patients being treated at Weston Park. In addition to this we provide approximately 7,600 individual doses for haematology patients at the Royal Hallamshire. This means on most days we are preparing over 120 doses of treatment, specifically formulated to the requirements of the prescription for each patient having treatment.
How do we make anti-cancer therapy?

The pharmacy team work in a specially designed area called an aseptic (sterile) unit. The unit contains environmentally controlled rooms, designed to allow high quality air to circulate. This ensures that all the products we make are prepared in a clean and sterile environment. Each drug is prepared in the unit on an individual basis in specially designed equipment called isolators.

Sometimes it can take a while for my treatment to be made – why is this?

The pharmacy team can only prepare your treatment after the doctor has completed the prescription. At Weston Park we use an electronic prescribing system which allows the pharmacy department to access the prescription as soon as it has been prescribed. Sometimes it can take longer to prepare anti-cancer therapy. This can be because:

- Sometimes you may need to have a repeat blood test on the day of treatment. Depending on the type of treatment you are having, this may prevent us from making your treatment in advance.
- Some treatments can be complicated to make and these drugs take longer to prepare.
- Some of the treatments we prepare can be very expensive. We make these when the patient arrives at Weston Park Hospital and we know that they are well enough to receive treatment that day.
- Clinical trial medications take longer to prepare as the drugs involved are often more complex. There is also additional documentation that must be completed in pharmacy to ensure that national and European legislation is met.
- Some treatments have a very short expiry once they are made so we prepare them when the patient arrives for their appointment.
Who is involved with the preparation of my anti-cancer therapy?

The pharmacy team are a group of highly trained staff:

- **Pharmacy Support Workers** trained to prepare products in sterile conditions, carry out cleaning, monitoring of areas and equipment. They also support pharmacy technicians.
- **Pharmacy Technicians** supervise the preparation of treatments. They carry out the tasks above whilst also being responsible for the production, completion and checking of documentation for products prepared in the unit. Technicians are also involved with the training of unit staff.
- **Pharmacists** have overall supervision of the anti-cancer therapy unit. They are responsible for checking prescriptions prior to preparation to ensure the correct doses have been prescribed. Pharmacists also check each product has been made and stored correctly. Pharmacists are also responsible for the training and education of all members of staff in the unit.

All the pharmacy staff at Weston Park Hospital are committed to providing a high-quality service to patients and their families. They are continually trying to improve with the aim of providing a patient-centred service.

You can speak to an Oncology Pharmacist when you come to Weston Park for your treatment. There is always a pharmacist available for consultation at the Pharmacy, located on the 1st floor. We are open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm. If you are receiving treatment on a ward, there is always a pharmacist present who can answer any questions you may have about your anti-cancer therapy or other medications.
What facilities are available for meals and drinks at Weston Park Hospital?

Hot and cold drinks, snacks and confectionery are available in the WRVS Snack Bar, which is on the ground floor in the main reception area. The ground floor also has vending machines which are open 24 hours a day.

The dining room on the 2nd floor serves drinks, snacks or meals and is open from 8.00am. Hot food is available at certain times throughout the day. Drinks and snacks are also available from a vending machine.

If you are having a short stay treatment which takes all day to deliver, or you are an inpatient on the ward, you will be provided with meals. You and your visitors may also use the roof garden on the 4th floor where there are plenty of seats.

No smoking

Weston Park Hospital is a smoke-free zone, which means that you are not allowed to smoke anywhere in the buildings or grounds. If you would like help to stop smoking, telephone the Yorkshire Smokefree stop smoking service on:

- 0800 612 0011 (free from a landline phone), or
- 0330 660 1166 (free from most mobiles)

What do I do if I have other questions or concerns, or would like some advice?

Please ask the nursing staff in the Day Case Unit or on the ward. They will be happy to help.
What do I do if I have questions or concerns after I have gone home?

If you have any questions or concerns you should telephone the ward or department where you have had your treatment. Call the hospital on: **0114 226 5000** and ask for the department or ward where you received your treatment.

In the evening after 5.00pm, or at the weekend, ring **0114 266 8345** or **0114 271 2733** and ask for the assessment unit nurse.

If your query is about an outpatient appointment or transport, ring **0114 226 5300** (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm).

If you feel unwell at any time of day or night, or have any concerns about taking your medications, we have a 24 hour telephone advice service. Ring **0114 266 8345** or **0114 271 2733** and ask to speak to the assessment unit nurse at Weston Park Hospital.

**Important advice**

It is important that you know what to do if you feel ill at home.

If you have had chemotherapy within the last month and you think you have developed symptoms of infection, such as sore throat, a temperature above 37.5°C, shivering or if you have unusual bruising or bleeding (for example heavy nose bleeds), **it is essential to phone Weston Park Hospital for urgent medical help as your symptoms may become life threatening:**

**Weston Park Hospital:** Tel: **0114 266 8345** or **0114 271 2733**

Tell the switchboard to put you through to the assessment unit nurse practitioner. They will connect you to someone who can advise you.
Further information is also available from:

**Weston Park Cancer Information and Support Centre**
23 Northumberland Road
Sheffield S10 2TX

- Website: [www.cancersupportcentre.co.uk](http://www.cancersupportcentre.co.uk)
- Email: info@cancersupportcentre.co.uk
- Tel: 0114 226 5391

**Cavendish Centre for Cancer Care**

- Website: [www.cavcare.org](http://www.cavcare.org)
- Tel: 0114 278 4600

**Headways**

If you are likely to lose some or all of your hair due to cancer treatment, the Headways Service is for you. They can give you advice and practical information about the types of headwear you can use, for times when you do not want to wear a wig. For friendly advice and a demonstration please call in to the Patients' Library on the ground floor at Weston Park Hospital.

They are available from 10.00am to 4.00pm; Monday to Friday. For more details phone:

- 0114 226 5390
Routes to Weston Park Hospital

Central Sheffield

Recommended routes

From Barnsley and Rotherham (A61)

From Manchester and Glossop (A57)

From Chesterfield (A625)

From M1 (J33) and M18