

## **Directorate of Women's Services**

# **Local Information and Sources of Support for Gynaecology Cancer Patients**

## **Royal Victoria Infirmary Newcastle upon Tyne**

### **Introduction**

We understand that this may be a very anxious time for you, your family and friends but we want to reassure you that there are people here to help and support you.

The aim of this information leaflet is to:

- Explain who will be involved in your care and how to contact them
- Point you in the direction of further information and support
- Provide other information you may want such as visiting times, car parking etc

Some patients with gynaecological cancers are not given a definite diagnosis until after surgery, so not all of the information below may apply to you. Your consultant or specialist nurse will discuss this with you.

### **How your cancer is diagnosed and who will be looking after you**

Your diagnosis is made by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT), who are experts in gynaecological cancer. This team also meet to look at the treatment options available to you.

The main members of this team include:

- Your specialist consultant
- Nurse specialist

- Oncologist (cancer specialist)
- Radiologist (specialist in interpreting scans and x-rays)
- Histopathologist (specialist who looks at tissue and biopsies)

There are also specialist members of the team who may be called upon if needed and these may include:

- Dietician
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational therapist
- Other specialist doctors
- Palliative Care Specialist (Experts in relieving the symptoms of cancer should they become troublesome)

The team will offer you a copy of the letter sent to your GP explaining your diagnosis. This can help you remember the details of the diagnosis and treatment options at a later date.

### **Who can I talk to if I have any questions or problems?**

Your hospital consultant, specialist nurse and GP are the people who know most about your cancer so they are the best people to answer your questions.

Your local hospital Team is:

Cancer Lead Consultant  
Tel. 0191 2825861 (9.00 am – 5.00 pm)

Gynae Oncology Nurse Specialist  
Tel. 0191 2138338 (9.00 am – 5.00 pm)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Your local hospital team are members of a specialist MDT at the Northern Gynaecological Oncology Centre (NGOC) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead. Further tests may need to be carried out before we discuss your treatment options with you.

After your diagnosis a member of the hospital team, usually the nurse specialist will act as your key worker. Please use the contact telephone numbers above if you have any questions or concerns.

Your key worker may change during the course of your cancer journey as you move from one department to another. You will be updated with any new names and contact details if and when a change occurs.

### **Where will I have the tests and treatment?**

Some of your tests will be carried out at the RVI, although we may involve the expertise and equipment available to us at other hospitals across the region, generally the NCOG at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead and the Northern Centre for Cancer Care (NCCC) at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. You may need one or more tests before your consultant is able to confirm a cancer.

If you have to travel for tests or treatment your hospital team will explain why it is necessary and give you as much information as they can.

### **Treatment**

All your treatment options will be explained and discussed with you. Each patient is assessed individually to assess their fitness for treatment options.

### **Surgery**

Surgery may be the only treatment that is required for some patients. For others an operation may be carried out before or after other forms of treatment. Surgery may not be appropriate for all patients. Some surgery is carried out here at the RVI and other patients will have surgery at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead.

### **Chemotherapy**

Chemotherapy involves giving a course of drugs over a period of time at regular intervals in order to treat your cancer. If it is given before surgery, chemotherapy may be used to reduce the size of the cancer and destroy the cancer cells. After surgery

chemotherapy works throughout the system to kill cancer cells that may have spread throughout the body. There are many types of drugs and each have possible side effects. Your oncologist and chemotherapy nurse will discuss this before you start treatment and are there to offer support throughout your treatment. Not all patients need chemotherapy.

## **Radiotherapy**

This involves the use of high dose x-rays to treat cancer. Radiotherapy is given at the NCCC at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. Radiotherapy works by destroying cancer cells in the area that is being treated. You will see an oncologist at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead first. Your individual treatment plan will then be discussed at NCCC before starting your treatment. Not all patients will need radiotherapy.

## **Where else can I get information and support?**

Your GP and the hospital teams, especially your key worker, are there to support you and give you information but there are other places you can access information.

If you or your family and friends are looking for additional information or support locally there are **Macmillan Information and Support Centres** at the NCCC (Tel. 0191 2138611) and the NCOG at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Tel. 0191 4452979 – 9.00 am – 5.00 pm)

If you have access to the internet the following websites have up to date information that is reviewed regularly by qualified professionals.

- Macmillan - [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
- Jo's Trust Fighting Cervical Cancer – [www.jotrust.co.uk](http://www.jotrust.co.uk)
- Target Ovarian Cancer – [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)

If you do not have access to the internet ask at the Macmillan Information and Support Centres at the relevant hospital or your local library to get this information for you. If you need to go regularly for treatment to any of the hospitals mentioned in this information leaflet then please ask for information about any concessions for travel/parking that may be available for cancer patients.

## Websites

Gateshead : [www.gatesheadhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.gatesheadhealth.nhs.uk)

RVI or Freeman Hospital: -  
[www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk](http://www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk)

The above websites also have useful travel information including public transport routes and maps for getting around these hospital sites.

Other sources of information and support can be found via your local hospice. The hospice offers a range of services to you and your family in a friendly relaxed setting and we would encourage you to ask your hospital team what they can offer you and your family.

## Support Groups

**Gynaecological support group “Caring Together”** is a support group for women who have had any gynaecological cancer. Nurse specialists attend the group meetings and can offer support. Peer support is also available. The session is held on the first Monday afternoon of each month in the **Colposcopy clinic** at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead between 2pm – 4pm. For more information please contact either **Helen Manderville** or **Alison Guest** via the Queen Elizabeth Hospital switchboard 0191 482 0000.

## What other services are available to me and my family?

It is not only doctors and nurses in hospital that are involved in your care, but many other health and social care professionals can be called upon, including district nurses, Macmillan nurses and hospice staff. Support will be offered to you throughout your care from hospital and community staff. If you feel unsure about anything, you can contact your specialist nurse/key worker who with your consent can plan your care with the relevant staff and services.

## What happens if I am having problems with money?

The Macmillan Information and Support Service can provide access to information to support you with any financial worries you

might have. They can also offer one to one expert advice and support on benefits and related financial issues.

Cancer often causes money worries in unexpected ways, e.g. larger heating bills, the need for new clothes due to weight loss/gain or having to give up work, even if it is only for a while. If you normally pay for your prescriptions, once you have a confirmed diagnosis of cancer, you can get an exemption certificate for your prescription charges. Your GP can supply you with an exemption application form (FP92A)

### **Spiritual Support**

Being faced with a serious diagnosis, or the possibility of one often gives rise to people questioning any faith they might have, or seeking answers to questions they may not have thought about before. You might find that you want to talk to someone who might understand these thoughts and feelings and your local church or faith group may be able to offer you some support close to your home.

If you are offered surgery locally you can ask to have someone from the Hospital Chaplaincy Team visit you. The team consists of people from various faiths and denominations with the aim of promoting the spiritual well-being of everyone in hospital. The Chaplains are not notified when you are in the hospital, you will need to ask for their support.

### **Cancer Research and Clinical Trials**

As part of your ongoing care you may be approached about a clinical trial. Clinical trials in cancer look at new drugs or a combination of drugs, new ways of giving treatment, or tests looking at the genes involved in cancer. Research is needed to improve current cancer care and find treatments with fewer side effects.

Clinical trials are carefully planned by scientific methods, which follow a protocol (study plan). This is designed to provide a clear answer at the end of the research. Individual trials may ask for people to join that have a certain type of cancer or stage of disease – this is called “eligibility criteria”. A trial may ask for extra blood tests, x-rays or monitoring during treatment.

Choosing to take part in a clinical trial can be a difficult decision so you will be given time to read through an information sheet and you are encouraged to discuss any study with your hospital team as well as your GP and your family.

It is important that you feel comfortable about taking part in a clinical trial. You will receive the best possible care, whether you choose to participate in a trial or not.

## **Genetics**

You may have heard that certain cancers can run in families. Your hospital team will talk to you about the risks but if you or your family have any questions about this, your hospital team will be more than happy to discuss this with you.

## **Hospital car parking and transport arrangements**

There is patient and public car parking provided on all of the hospital sites. As car parking charges and arrangements often change, we suggest that you check on the Trust websites for the most up to date information.

Produced by Gynaecology Nurse Specialist

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