

Patient information

Essential Information for the Head and Neck Cancer Patient

Head and Neck Cancer Services - Aintree Hospital

A diagnosis of Head and Neck Cancer by your local Maxillofacial/ENT team means that you will be referred to the Aintree Head and Neck Cancer Centre. This is based at University Hospital Aintree in Fazakerley, Liverpool.

You will be referred to a named Consultant and you will attend their clinic. This may be in Aintree or one of the local clinics.

Head and Neck Cancer Centre

Head and Neck Cancer has been designated as an uncommon cancer and is treated by a medical team with a high degree of expertise. It is therefore better for one central team to see all the patients, rather than many teams in different areas.

Aintree has a designated Head & Neck Cancer Ward which specialises in patients undergoing treatment, investigations and surgery.

There are also patients who are having surgery that is not for cancer but they need the specialist nursing from the team.

It has a team of doctors, nurses and other professionals (clinical nurse specialists, dieticians, physiotherapists and speech & language therapists) that will provide specialist care and treatment as part of your journey.

Choosing the Best Treatment

You will feel reassured to know that to help the team make the right treatment plan for you we will need to gain information about your cancer.

Test and Investigations

In order to make the right decision you will need to have some tests done. These may take place at your local hospital or the Centre. When you attend the clinic a doctor would have listened to an account of your illness and any symptoms you may have developed. He or she will also examine your mouth or throat carefully.

The next stage is usually some X-rays and/or scans to help the team understand more about your cancer.

A biopsy (a small piece of tissue) will need to be taken to tell us what type of cancer you have. This may be done in the form of a short stay operation or under local anaesthetic in the clinic.

If you have a lump on your neck a Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) may be done in the clinic to give them a diagnosis whilst you are there.

Sometimes other tests may need to be done to help the team decide on the best treatment for you. They will inform you of these tests and the reason that they need to be done.

You will then be referred to the Aintree team for an opinion.

The Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

Once you have been diagnosed with cancer, your case will be discussed at the Head and Neck Multidisciplinary team meeting held at Aintree every Wednesday morning.

The MDT Head and Neck team consists of:

- Head and Neck Consultants.
- Clinical Oncologist (for patients requiring Radiotherapy).
- Radiologist (responsible for X-rays and scans).
- Histopathologist/Cytopathologist (responsible for biopsy samples).
- Restorative Dentist.
- Clinical Nurse Specialist (Key worker).
- Palliative care representative.
- Speech and Language therapist.
- Dietician.
- MDT Coordinator.

The MDT is responsible for:

- Making sure the diagnosis is correct and that all the necessary tests have been carried out.
- Deciding on the best treatment options for you.
- Reviewing your progress with the treatment and deciding on any further treatments if necessary.

The MDT may decide on one treatment or a variety of options may be available to you.

Decisions made at the MDT will be discussed with you at your next meeting with your Consultant. Once your Consultant has explained the diagnosis to you, they will discuss the possible treatment that you may have. You may have more than one appointment with the Consultant in the clinic as other specialist tests or information may be required to ensure that the correct treatment is decided, this will all be explained to you at the time.

Treatment may include surgery with or without radiotherapy, and sometimes radiotherapy and chemotherapy alone or combined together. We will help to explain the options/choices to you and make sure you are aware of what is happening at each stage of your treatment.

In the clinic there can be other members of the team besides the doctor in the room. They will be introduced to you.

Many people are worried about their treatment – whether or not it will work or how to cope with the side effects. It helps to make a list of questions you wish to ask before your appointment and do not be afraid to ask the Consultant to repeat any explanations you don't understand.

It may be helpful to bring a close relative or friend with you to the appointment. If you are feeling anxious or worried they might be able to remember details of the meeting which you may have forgotten or you may want them to ask questions on your behalf.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your diagnosis or treatment with a particular member of the Team please let your Key worker/Clinical Nurse Specialist know and they will arrange this.

Nurse Specialist

The Clinical Nurse Specialist that you will see are nurses working within the cancer field. These nurses provide support and information to people with cancer and their families and carers. They aim to see patients from the point of diagnosis and throughout their treatment.

You will be given contact details for your Clinical Nurse Specialist (also known as Key Worker) whilst in the clinic.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Local advice/Groups

The Liverpool Head and Neck Cancer website is a local website to provide information for patients and carers. It has an online forum and message board for patients and carers.
www.liveheadandneck.co.uk

The Head and Neck Cancer Information and Support Service is a telephone helpline run by the Clinical Nurse Specialists at Aintree. When the telephone is not manned there is an answer phone to leave messages.

**Tel: 0151 529 5256
Monday – Friday 8 till 4pm**

Head and Neck Cancer Patient and Carer Support Group

A local support groups with patients who have a similar type and site of cancer as yourself and Head and Neck general information leaflets, please ask your Clinical Nurse Specialist who will give you details of the groups contact and when the meetings are taking place

**Clinical Nurse Specialists
Tel: 0151 529 5256 Direct line/answer phone.**

Knowsley Cancer Support Centre

**Lyndale
40 Huyton Lane
Huyton
Liverpool L36 7XG
Tel: 0151 489 3538**

Mon – Fri 10am – 3pm Answer service out of hours

Provides emotional support and practical help to cancer patients, families and carers. Drop in facilities, library, social activities, home and hospital visits. Relaxation classes and benefits advice.

Sunflowers

**21 Aigburth Road
Liverpool L17 4JR**

Tel: 0151 726 8934, 24 hour helpline

Provides emotional support and practical advice through an active self help group. Advocacy service, home and hospital visits and complimentary therapies.

Sefton Cancer Support Group/The Daisy Chain
88 Liverpool Road
Formby
Liverpool L37 6BS
Tel: 01704 879352 10am – 4pm

The aim of the group is to be available to lend a helping hand and listening ear for general advice and information for cancer patients and families. Complementary therapies and home visits.

There is also a Monday afternoon session in the May Logan Centre in Bootle.

The Princess Royal Trust,
Knowsley Carers Centre
Bewley Drive
Kirkby
Liverpool L32
Tel: 0151 549 1412

They provide a listening ear for all carers in Knowsley. They can offer practical help, advice on subjects such as welfare benefits and respite for cares. Carers can take part in social events, leisure and relaxation courses. Emotional support and information is available.

The Princess Royal Trust,
Sefton Carers Centre
39-41 South Road
Waterloo
Liverpool L22 5PE
Tel: 288 6060

They provide information, support and a listening ear for all carers in Sefton. Also benefit, respite care, social events, complimentary therapies and relaxation to encourage carers to take some time to themselves.

National Groups

We are Macmillan Cancer Support
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7UQ
Tel: 0800 808 0000 (Free Phone)
www.macmillan.org.uk

This offers a free and confidential advice and information service about cancer to patients, families and carers. It also provides financial help and advice for cancer sufferers.

Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of any material referenced in this leaflet that has not been produced and approved by the Trust.

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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