

Patient information

Outpatient Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT) Service

Aintree Hospital

What is OPAT?

The Outpatient Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT) service provides complex infection management as an outpatient, with the aim of avoiding admission to hospital or enabling earlier discharge. Treatments we offer include intravenous antibiotics, oral antibiotics which require intensive monitoring and inhaled antibiotics.

The OPAT service is run by a multi-disciplinary team including Consultants in Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, Clinical Nurse Specialists (hospital and community based), Antimicrobial (OPAT) pharmacists & OPAT co-ordinators whose aim is to deliver the best care for you. We also work closely with referring specialty teams (e.g., Surgeons, general practitioners).

Can all patients receive OPAT?

OPAT is available to suitable patients aged 16 years and over. We accept referrals for current inpatients and to patients where admission avoidance can be safely facilitated.

It is essential that we have up to date contact details before we consider OPAT.

What are the benefits of OPAT?

OPAT will hopefully allow you to be discharged from hospital earlier or remain at home if this is the safest option. There are lots of benefits of not being in hospital including reducing the risks of healthcare acquired infections and falls. Generally, we also find that people's nutrition improves whilst at home. It allows you to spend more time with friends and family and quickly return to your normal activities. Many of our patients receiving OPAT can get back to work.

What are the potential risks of OPAT?

You will receive all the information you need about medicines and their side effects, as well as caring for your intravenous (IV) line at home.

Antibiotic side effects and allergies

Antibiotic reactions such as diarrhoea and nausea are common. Your primary medical team will discuss possible side effects with you and will help you to monitor and manage these symptoms through your treatment. Antibiotic allergies are uncommon, but serious side effects can occur at any time. We monitor early doses carefully to ensure individuals do not develop a severe reaction at the start of treatment.

Intravenous access

We try to send all OPAT patients home with IV access that will last for the length of their treatment. However, sometimes despite excellent care, cannulas or long lines may need replacing or treatment altered if the IV access stops working. Several different intravenous lines can be used to give your antibiotic treatment. The most suitable line will be selected depending on the length of time that you require antibiotics for and if you require regular blood testing.

If you have any concerns, please discuss with your primary ward clinical team. If you are already home please raise concerns via the OPAT/DN team who can organise IV access review if needed

How will I receive my intravenous antibiotics?

The two main intravenous lines used in our service are:

Midline – a midline catheter is a thin, flexible, hollow tube (described as a ‘catheter’). They can be simply described as a long cannula. One end of the midline is fixed to the crease of your elbow and allows your doctor or nurse to administer medication into veins. Midlines can stay in place for approximately four weeks if required.

A Midline catheter is similar to a PICC, but it is shorter in length and is threaded into a large vein in your upper arm. Blood samples cannot be taken from a Midline.

PICC - PICC stands for **P**eripherally **I**nserted **C**entral **V**enous **C**atheter. This is a special intravenous catheter that is put into one of the veins near the bend of the elbow or higher up in the arm. It is then threaded to the largest vein in your body, called the Vena Cava.

The PICC allows you to get the medication you need and to have blood samples drawn without the need for repeated needles being inserted in your arms.

Where can I receive my intravenous antibiotics?

The OPAT Team is based on Ward 8A, Royal Liverpool Hospital. You may be requested to attend the Ward if you are an outpatient when you are referred. You may receive some doses IV antibiotics on the Ward especially your first doses or if you are on a complex antibiotic regimen. This may also take place at the MDCU on the Aintree site (Mon-Friday)

Most patients will be treated in community health centres close to their home and will have to attend every day, bringing their daily dose of antibiotic and saline infusion bag/bottle with them to the appointment.

In Liverpool, these are:

- South Liverpool Treatment Centre (Garston).
- Breeze Hill Neighbourhood Centre (Walton).
- Litherland Town Hall Health Centre.

Some patients with severely reduced mobility or other needs will be visited at home by a District Nurse.

The full course of your antibiotic medication will be supplied by the hospital pharmacy on discharge. Any further supplies (extension to treatment course) will be supplied via the Lloyds pharmacy (on the ground floor of Aintree site).

You will be asked to collect these from Lloyds Pharmacy, if unable to send via courier Lloyd's pharmacy opening hours: 0800-1800 Monday to Friday.

Any collections across a weekend will be from main hospital pharmacy (ground floor) Lloyd's pharmacy telephone number: 0151 706 6018

When will I be able to go home?

When everyone involved in your care (including yourself, your current Consultant and the AUH OPAT team) are in agreement that you don't need to be in hospital anymore we will arrange to move your treatment to OPAT as soon as possible.

We deliver our service in conjunction with community teams and there may be a short delay while we wait for clinic or district nurse availability. We work hard to keep any delays as short as possible and will keep you and your team updated.

How will I be monitored while on OPAT?

Patients on longer courses of antibiotics (usually more than one week) will have regular monitoring including weekly blood tests performed either by community teams or at phlebotomy. Other tests for example, ECGs, hearing tests, may be requested. Line access will also be monitored, and the line dressing changed regularly.

Monitoring your response to antibiotics is an important part of ensuring you can safely continue to receive the antibiotic therapy. If you do not attend for monitoring tests, OPAT may need to be stopped.

Your progress will be reviewed weekly at a multi-disciplinary team meeting led by the OPAT Consultant. If required, your clinical team will be informed of any changes or problems.

Do I have to continue with this kind of care?

No. If, for any reason, you decide that you no longer wish to continue to receive your antibiotic therapy in this way, then please contact your OPAT nurse and the team can advise on alternative treatment options (including readmission).

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 discharge letter, a feedback form and a self-addressed stamped envelope. We would be grateful if you could take the time to complete the feedback form and return it by post. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code at the end of this leaflet with your mobile device to complete the feedback form online.

Further information

Who to contact for help or further information:

Please contact the ward you were discharged from to request a call back from the medical team.

If your query is related to Liverpool community clinic appointment, please contact the community IV team on 0151 285 4696.

Emergencies:

For emergency enquiries such as a significant pain, bleeding or a dislodged intravenous device/line please attend the local Emergency Department (A&E).

Never try to reinsert an intravenous line that has been partially or completely pulled out.

If you feel very unwell at any time, please attend your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

Your OPAT service/community care details are:



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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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