

# Advanced Bowel Cancer

## When you are receiving Best Supportive Care

You have been given the diagnosis of bowel cancer but may feel well and have no symptoms. This may continue. Advanced bowel (colorectal) cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum that may or may not have spread to other parts of the body. You may hear this being called secondary or metastatic cancer.

If you have a stage 4 bowel cancer that has spread to other parts of the body such as the liver or lungs, there may be different treatment options or combinations of treatment available to you. Treatment is usually palliative, which means it relieves symptoms but cannot cure the cancer. Palliative treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy can keep the cancer under control, improve your quality of life and help you live longer.

Being told that your cancer can't be cured, or that your treatment is palliative can be distressing and worrying. Some people think palliative is for people at the end of lives. But this is not always the case. The aim of palliative care is to stay as active for as long as possible and to keep you feeling well.

Sometimes the most difficult thing is knowing who to contact should you develop symptoms from your cancer. This leaflet is to help you contact the right person. Your clinical nurse specialist may have already discussed some of these symptoms with you. Not everybody will have these.

## Potential symptoms

### What to do and who to contact

#### Weight loss:

Some weight loss can be part of the disease process. Weight loss may occur even if there are no changes in the amount of food you eat.

If you are concerned, advice can be obtained via your Community Dietician, District Nurse (DN), GP or Clinical Nurse Specialist Team (CNS).

#### Pain:

Not all patients will experience pain. If pain is a problem for you, then ask your GP who will be able to assist you with this. Your GP may ask for the Specialist Palliative Care Team (SPCT) to see you as they have can be very helpful in pain management and can see you in your own home.

## Constipation:

Some patients may experience constipation. If the tumour is causing a stricture you will need to keep your bowels loose by taking a laxative that your GP can prescribe for you. If the bowel becomes blocked and your bowel movements can't pass we may need to insert a colonic stent to relieve your symptoms. If you have any symptoms of obstruction, eg, abdominal distention and vomiting you should seek medical advice from GP, CNS or NHS 111.

Many opioid painkillers (morphine and codeine) can cause constipation and should be taken with a mild laxative.

## Diarrhoea:

Patients may suffer with loose stools due to the cancer or treatment they are receiving. If you have symptoms you can discuss this with your GP & CNS who may prescribe you some loperamide or barrier cream if you develop any rectal soreness.

## Nausea & Vomiting:

Nausea and vomiting is not a pleasant symptom. If this is troubling you then you can discuss it with your GP who will prescribe you some anti-sickness medications.

## Anaemia (low blood count):

Anaemia can make you feel more tired than usual, pale and breathless. Anaemia can occur for many reasons in cancer patients.

It can be related to your diet or bleeding. You may not notice the blood loss as it could be a small amount in your stool. However if you had a large rectal bleed you should seek medical advice immediately.

If you feel any of these symptoms please see your GP for a blood test or discuss with your CNS. Some patients require a blood transfusion or iron infusion to help with their symptoms.

## Emotional Distress:

A cancer diagnosis is a difficult time for both you and your family. If you or your family are having difficulties coming to terms with what is happening to you and feel you need some extra help and support then you can discuss with your CNS, DN's or GP. It maybe that you need a referral to our Counselling Service or SPCT who have services to help with these issues.

**The Macmillan Information and Support Service can help you with relevant information on diet, exercise, travel insurance, pensions and caring for someone affected by cancer and more**

## My Key Contacts

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary:

Switchboard: 01484 342000

Calderdale Royal Hospital:

Switchboard: 01422 357171

Consultant

Keyworker Cancer Nurse Specialist (CNS):

Paula Pickersgill

Michelle Speight

Tracy Woods

Ann Binns

Helen Ilsley

Lisa Diamond-Haigh

Colorectal Specialist Nurses: 01484 355062

Cancer Care Co-ordinator:

Vanessa Whitwam

01484 355062

Macmillan Cancer Information Centre:

Mandy Davies

Macmillan Unit Calderdale Royal Infirmary

01422 222709

Helen Jones

Greenlea Unit Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

01484 343614

**If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :**

Lisa Diamond-Haigh  
Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialist  
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary  
Lindley, Huddersfield  
HD3 3EA

Telephone No: 01484 355062

email: [colorectal.stoma@nhs.net](mailto:colorectal.stoma@nhs.net)

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

**If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.**

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਬ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਵੇਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ کی زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو براہ کرم مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"