How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?
Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand rub (special gel) available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand rub. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk
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Sexual Health when having systemic anti-cancer treatment

Patient Information Leaflet
If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please ask for assistance.
Introduction

This leaflet is aimed at patients over the age of 16 having systemic anti-cancer treatment (SACT) such as chemotherapy and targeted therapies, as there is some very important information you need to know.

Nurses may ask you about your sex life, relationships and whether you or your partner could be pregnant at different points during your treatment. They are trying to ensure you have the right information and feel supported about this important area of your life, as pregnancy or infection during SACT can be potentially life threatening. All discussions will be confidential.

You may or may not be sexually active and it can be difficult to discuss your sexual health and relationships. However, staff members will want to ask you some questions in order to keep you and your partner safe. Such as:

- Are you sexually active?
- Have you been sexually active since we last saw you?
- Have you got a sexual partner?
- What kind of contraception are you using?

These questions may feel embarrassing but please try and be honest.

Intimacy & Sexuality for Cancer Patients and their Partners
www.sexualadviceassociation.co.uk

Prostate cancer and your sex life
www.prostatecanceruk.org

Your body, intimacy and sex
www.breastcancercare.org.uk
Contraception

The drugs given to you when having systemic anti-cancer treatment can be passed from one individual to another via bodily fluids, and this could cause harm to your partner or any babies that are conceived.

If you are having sex (with a man or woman) you will need to use barrier methods (condoms and dams) to protect you and your partner.

We strongly advise that you or your partner do not try to get pregnant whilst having treatment.

Free condoms are available from your local sexual health clinic, please see page 4 for more details.

For advice about contraception related to your cancer treatment please ask your Oncologist or Clinical Nurse Specialist/Key Worker.

For general contraceptive advice, please call bSHaW (Bucks Sexual Health and Wellbeing) on 0300 303 2880.

If you choose to speak to them directly, please tell them if you are on active systemic anti-cancer treatment as their advice may differ depending on where you are up to with your treatment and what treatment you are having.

Sexual Health Information for People Having Cancer Treatment

Information from Macmillan Cancer Support available from www.bemacmillan.org.uk include:

- Sexuality and cancer – information for men
- Sexuality and cancer – information for women
- Sex and relationships – Support for young people affected by cancer.
Cancer treatment

If you are anaemic (low red cell count) and/or thrombocytopenic (low platelet count) you are more susceptible to bleeding and infection. Your cancer treatment can also lower your immune system. Please speak to your Nurse if you are unsure if you should be having sex or not. You will also need to be mindful about the sort of sex you are having. For example anal sex increases the risk of bleeding when your counts are low.

It is really important that you let your Chemotherapy Nurse or your Consultant know if you think you have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), (e.g. as you have had unprotected sex). You will need to receive treatment for the STI in a safe way alongside your cancer treatment.

You must not have treatment for an STI without first informing your Chemotherapy Nurse or Consultant in charge of your care.

General Sexual Health Information Resources

***Remember *** all services are confidential, for those under and over 16 years of age

Sexual Health Buckinghamshire   0300 303 2880  
www.sexualhealthbucks.nhs.uk  
Sexual health services in Buckinghamshire are provided by a number of different organisations. There are clinics at Wycombe Hospital (the SHAW clinic) and at Brookside in Aylesbury, both are run by Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHT Trust. In addition there are a range of community clinics offering both contraception and STI testing, run by the Terrence Higgins Trust.

National Sexual Health Helpline   0300 123 7123  
If you would like to talk to someone about a sexual health issue you can call the National Sexual Health Helpline free. Your call will be treated with sensitivity and in the strictest confidence.  (Open 9am-8pm, Monday – Friday)

Family Planning Association (FPA)   0300 123 7123  
www.fpa.org.uk  
Provides confidential information and advice on contraception, sexual and reproductive health. You can also get details of family planning clinics, sexual health clinics and other sexual health services anywhere in the UK.

Brook Advisory Centres  
www.brook.org.uk  
Free and confidential information for under 25s.

Your local GP surgery - whether it is for information or a discussion with the GP or practice nurse.