

Information for this leaflet was taken from the Oxford Centre for Head and Neck Oncology booklet "Information about the Thyroid Team"



Buckinghamshire Healthcare  
NHS Trust

### Free Prescriptions

All cancer patients undergoing treatment for cancer, the effects of cancer or the effects of cancer treatment can apply for an exemption certificate for a free prescription from their GP.

### 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](http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk)

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# The Thyroid Cancer Team

Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format for this leaflet please ask for assistance.

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Safe & compassionate care,

every time

If you have been told that you have cancer and need treatment, it is important that you understand what this might involve.

This leaflet contains general information and we would encourage you to speak to any member of the team.

### **The team involved in your treatment are:**

- Consultant Endocrine Surgeon
- Consultant Oncologist
- Consultant Radiologists
- Consultant Histopathologist
- Chemical Pathologist
- Superintendent Radiographer
- Endocrinologist
- Oncology and Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist (Key worker)
- Speech and Language Therapists

### **Cancer Research UK**

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

Butterfly Thyroid Cancer Trust

[www.butterfly.org.uk](http://www.butterfly.org.uk)

### **British Thyroid Foundation**

[www.btf-thyroid.org](http://www.btf-thyroid.org)

Other useful sites can be found in the

British Thyroid Association links page:

[www.british-thyroid-association.org](http://www.british-thyroid-association.org)

### **Macmillan Cancer Support – information in your language**

Macmillan Cancer Support is the UK's largest cancer information charity, providing information, support and practical advice on all cancers, treatments and supportive issues:

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Some of Macmillan's most commonly requested cancer information is available in different languages – see their website.

They can also provide interpreters in many languages. Call the main freephone number: 0808 808 0000

- Visit the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust website [www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk).  
For head and neck information click on Cancer in the A-Z of clinical services, this will take you to our cancer site, use the A-Z of services to find the information you require.
- You may want to contact Heads2gether: Head and Neck Cancer Support group. H2G members have already made the journey from diagnosis to recovery [www.heads2gether.net](http://www.heads2gether.net) 0800 023 4550
- Speak to your GP about a prescription exemption certificate. Having a cancer diagnosis entitles you to free prescriptions.

### Questions or further information

This is a lot of information for you to take in.

If you have any questions or concerns, or need any further information, then please contact your Thyroid Cancer Nurse Specialist on 01296 316097

You can also get further information and support from the Cancer Education, Information and Support Service in the Cancer Care and Haematology Unit at Stoke Mandeville Hospital on 01296 316954.

Following your cancer diagnosis, your test results and medical history are discussed in a multi-disciplinary team meeting (MDT), where all the head and neck team are present to plan a programme of treatment specific to you.

The surgical team will carry out any operation, and the oncologists provide radiotherapy, chemotherapy or radioactive iodine treatment.

It is normal for patients undergoing this sort of treatment to need help from other specialists, both before and after.

In this hospital we all work as a team, each with their own job, as described below.

### Thyroid cancer specialist nurse

It is the role of the thyroid cancer specialist nurse to support you when needed, from diagnosis and throughout treatment.

- At diagnosis and at each stage of your care pathway, you will be given information about the treatment options available, so that you can decide what is best for you.
- You can be given practical advice and information about any aspect of your illness or treatment and will also act as a link for you between home, the local health care team and hospital. The thyroid cancer specialist nurse can be contacted on 01296 316097.

### Key worker

The key worker will be your main point of contact with the hospital. They will be involved in coordinating your care. This role is usually carried out by the cancer nurse specialist, but this person may change as your needs change. We will let you know when this happens.

## Dietitian

It is the dietitian's job to make sure that you are receiving all the nutrients that your body needs.

This is particularly important if you are going to have any treatment, when you need to be as strong as possible, so that your immune system is working as well as it can and any wounds heal well afterwards.

If you are experiencing difficulty with eating or drinking, or have lost weight, the dietitian may give you advice about:

- suitable foods to eat
- adding extra nourishment to your food
- supplement drinks
- balanced meals

## Speech and language therapist

This service is available if you are experiencing speech, voice or swallowing problems that are affecting your communication and/or eating and drinking. It is possible that your voice (vocal folds) may be affected by thyroid surgery. A weak voice may affect your communication. Damage to your vocal folds can also make swallowing liquids more difficult, causing you to cough.

Normally these changes in voice and swallowing are temporary. However, if your voice and/or swallowing difficulty continues the Speech and Language Therapist will be able to see you for an assessment. You may need an examination of your larynx before speech and language therapy starts to find out if your vocal folds have been affected by surgery.

## What you can do to help

While you are waiting for your treatment, there are things that you can do to help.

- If you are a smoker, then try to stop smoking. All GP surgeries have a smoking cessation advisor who will help support you through any attempt to quit smoking and advise you about nicotine replacement, which is available on prescription.
- Reduce alcohol intake to a maximum of three units per day. If you need support to reduce your alcohol intake, then please speak to the specialist nurses.
- Eat a well-balanced, high calorie diet. If this is not possible, follow the advice given by the dietitian.
- Seek support from your family and friends – you will need their help to get you through. Talk about your diagnosis and what treatment involves.
- Feel free to bring a relative or friend with you to the clinic visits. They may be able to support you and help remember what has been discussed.
- Write down any questions you or your family have, so that we can answer them next time you attend the hospital. Remember that these clinics are busy and you may have to wait a little while.
- Visit your dentist – it is important that your teeth are checked before you undergo treatment.