

Hospital at Home - OPAT (Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy) Service

Introduction

You have been referred to the Hospital at Home / Outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy (OPAT) service for consideration of either Intravenous (IV) drug / antibiotic treatment or more than 2 weeks oral antibiotic treatment.

If you are considered suitable you will be able to complete your IV / Oral antibiotic treatment in either your home or an outpatient setting.

Why do I need IV drugs / antibiotics?

IV treatments are used to treat many types of conditions and bacterial infections.

In some medical conditions and depending on your condition, IV drugs or antibiotics are the most appropriate way to be treated.

Why do I need long term oral antibiotics?

Depending on the organism and the infection you have, oral antibiotics can be just as effective as an IV treatment. The medical / OPAT team will discuss this with you.

What is Hospital at Home / OPAT?

The Hospital at home / OPAT service is a team of specialist nurses who co-ordinate and provide ongoing care for patients requiring IV treatments and / or long term oral antibiotic therapy in the community.

The team will discuss the process of how the service works for your treatment and ensure that you are discharged with the correct treatment(s) and all the equipment needed for this to be given safely at home or as an outpatient.

The IV treatment can be given either at home, or in the hospital outpatient department. It may be administered by the adult community healthcare team (AHC) in your home. Or, depending on the drug, you or your carer can be taught to administer it yourselves.

The OPAT team will also arrange for as required blood tests (depending on treatment) and co-ordinate medical reviews with your discharging Team / Consultant.

The OPAT team will also provide you with a specific set of hand held notes and contact details. You should keep the booklet with you at all times until the end of your course of treatment.

How will the IV treatment / antibiotics be given?

For the IV treatment you will require a device that goes into a vein, so that you can receive your IV treatment safely in the community.

The main devices are either a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC for short) , midline or cannula. The device will depend on the type and duration of IV treatment. A standard peripheral cannula may be suitable for some patients.

You will be given an explanation and a specific leaflet about the device and how to look after it by the OPAT team. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask a member of the OPAT team.

Self / Carer Administration

If this process is deemed suitable. The OPAT team will show you the equipment and process required to administer your antibiotics.

You will be assessed over a number of sessions or days by the OPAT team until you feel confident enough to perform the treatment yourself.

Duration of treatment.

The duration of your IV treatment will depend on the underlying condition you have been referred to the service for.

The completion dates will be reviewed regularly in conjunction with your referring consultant and the microbiology team (if having antibiotics).

When deemed appropriate you will either :

- Stop IV treatment as planned
- Switch from the IV treatment to an oral antibiotic for another set period of time
- Extend your oral antibiotics further.

The Consultant/ Team and OPAT service will discuss these changes with you and coordinate the changes.

The OPAT team will continue to monitor you throughout your whole treatment plan.

Are there any side effects?

All medicines can have side effects. The OPAT team will discuss the most common side effects with you depending on your treatment. If you experience any ongoing symptoms, please speak contact to the OPAT service or community nursing team.

Monitoring at home.

Depending on the treatment you are going to receive, you may be asked to monitor your symptoms along with your temperature, blood pressure on a daily basis. This will be discussed in more detail and further information given to you.

What should I do if I start to feel unwell or need advice?

Please let a member of the OPAT team, community nursing team know as soon as possible, if you have any of the symptoms below:

- Recurrence of your initial symptoms
- Raised temperature (fever) or shaking
- Ongoing dizziness, facial flushing or rash
- Sore throat, aching, headache, nausea or ongoing diarrhoea
- Generally feeling unwell

Who to contact

The OPAT / IV therapy team are available 7 days a week 8 – 4.30 to support you and answer any questions you may have. Further contact details may be given depending on your treatment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us as follows:

OPAT Team:

Mon-Sun: 8.30am- 4.30pm Tel: 01296 315485 or 07810 181 584

Bank Holidays: 9.00am- 4.00pm (on call basis) Tel: 07810 181 584

Outside of these hours for emergencies:

Please contact your GP surgery. They will guide you to the out of hours on-call telephone number for emergencies. Alternatively call 111 or attend Accident and Emergency.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

If you need advice or further assistance, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS): 01296 316042 or email bht.pals@nhs.net

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.