



# A guide to...

## Support for self-managed follow-up for colorectal cancer

### *Patient Information*

#### How to contact us

Colorectal Department  
Watford General Hospital  
West Hertfordshire NHS Trust  
Vicarage Road  
Watford  
Hertfordshire  
WD23 0HB  
**Tel:** 01923 217983

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net)



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## **Supported self-managed follow-up arrangements for patients who have completed treatment for bowel cancer**

### **Why have you been selected for support self-managed follow-up?**

You have been selected for the supported self-managed follow up because your colorectal cancer clinical team believe this is the best way of keeping a close eye on your recovery following your cancer treatment. A computerised system allows the team to monitor the results of your regular tests and recalls you quickly to hospital in the event of any concern. It gives you the freedom to get on with your life, but with the reassurance that there are specialist clinicians monitoring your progress and a fast way back into the hospital should you need to.

### **About supported self-managed follow-up**

A dedicated Colorectal Nurse Specialist uses a special computerised system to monitor your test results and to call you back into hospital if they feel you need further tests or investigations. The system records and monitors your test results and alerts the team if there are any changes that need further investigations or treatment. This system is checked on a weekly basis by the colorectal nurse specialist.

### **The regular tests you will need**

For colorectal cancer you will need to have at least two CT scans within the first three years following treatment. You may also need to have a colonoscopy a year after your surgery and then again at five years post-surgery. The clinical team will inform you if you need a colonoscopy. The hospital will send you reminders of when your tests are due.

### **How supported self-managed follow-up works**

When your CT scan or colonoscopy is due you will receive a letter giving you an appointment for a CT scan or colonoscopy. The results of your scan or colonoscopy will automatically be recorded on the follow up computer system and will be checked carefully by the relevant clinical staff.

If your results are normal you and your GP will receive a letter confirming this. With the self-managed follow up if your results are normal and you are symptom free then you will not routinely need to attend the hospital for follow up appointments. If the team are concerned following your tests then they will contact you as necessary, like wise if you have any concerns then please contact the team.

## **Benefits of the supported self-managed follow-up system**

- You will not have to make unnecessary trips to the hospital at times when you are symptom-free and getting on with your life
- No longer have to take time off from work or pay travelling or parking charges for outpatient appointments that you do not need.
- You should receive an improved experience of care, with the advantage of a telephone number that you can ring if you have any queries on results or your follow-up.

## **Supported self-managed follow-up contacts**

If you have any of following queries regarding your follow up, please telephone the **colorectal nurse specialist** on **07741 165312**. The colorectal nurse specialist works Monday – Wednesday between 8am – 4pm

- Queries on how your follow up works
- Queries on any results or appointments

## **Signs and symptoms to report**

Everyone is different and it is you who knows your body best, so we would much rather you telephone the colorectal cancer nurse specialists with a concern that turns out to be nothing then have you sitting at home worrying. The sooner you share your symptoms or concerns with us, the quicker we can help to resolve the problem.

The symptoms below could indicate a return or spread of the disease and need further investigations:

- Rectal bleeding that does not go away. We are not worried about the occasional few spots on the toilet paper, but anything more than this that persists for a few days should be reported.
- Any new abdominal pain which does not go away, and which last for longer than a week
- Unexplained weight loss

If you experience any of the above symptoms, please contact the colorectal cancer nurse specialists on 01923 217983.

**If your symptoms are particularly worrying, especially in the case of sudden heavy bleeding, or severe and persistent abdominal pain, you should contact your GP immediately or go straight to the hospital Emergency Department.**