



## Fortuneswell Unit

# Introduction to your Cancer Treatment

### Treatment and side effects

- We administer many different anti-cancer treatments on the unit. You may be receiving chemotherapy, immunotherapy, a targeted treatment or a combination of these. Please make sure you have read the information leaflet regarding the specific treatment you are having.
- Anti-cancer drugs can be damaging to healthy cells as well as cancer cells, so it very important that you contact the 24-hour Acute Oncology Helpline for advice on any concerning side effects or symptoms. **If you report symptoms early, we are more likely to be able to prevent them becoming serious.**
- **You need to buy a thermometer and practice using it** before you start your treatment. This is because cancer treatments, particularly chemotherapy, can lower your immune system and reduce your ability to fight infections. A high or low temperature may indicate infection and you will be asked to check your temperature if you feel unwell.
- **You must call the 24-hour Acute Oncology Helpline immediately on 01305 255995 if you feel generally unwell or have any concerning side effects. These include:**
  - Temperature above 37.5° or below 35.5° (note that paracetamol & ibuprofen mask a temperature so please avoid these medications if you are feeling unwell)
  - Uncontrollable shivering or 'flu-like' symptoms
  - New shortness of breath (breathing difficulty - call 999)
  - Any new or worsening pain (chest pain - call 999)
  - Diarrhoea – four or more loose bowel movements in 24 hours
  - Nausea/vomiting/sore mouth affecting ability to eat or drink
  - Any bleeding or unusual bruising
  - Rash/inflammation of skin or wound
  - Swollen or painful legs
  - Unresolved/persistent constipation
- Family members can also call us on your behalf if they are worried. You may need to come to hospital urgently, so please have a plan in case this happens.

## Bridport Outreach Clinic

- There is now an outreach clinic at Bridport Hospital for patients that live in the Bridport area, including Lyme Regis, Charmouth, Beaminster and Portesham. Nurses from the Fortuneswell Unit run the clinic, where most of our treatments can be administered. You need to have had **two** treatments on Fortuneswell Unit initially (to check for any reactions) and then you can continue your treatment in Bridport. Please ask for more information.
- Please note, if you attend the Bridport clinic, your appointment time may have to be changed at short notice due to the demands on the service.

## Day of treatment

- Unless advised otherwise, please take your usual medications on the day of treatment and bring any regular medications with you, eg painkillers or insulin.
- Eat breakfast/lunch as normal before coming to the unit.
- Let the receptionist know when you arrive and take a seat in the waiting area. We will then take a set of observations (blood pressure, pulse, temp, oxygen saturation) and weigh you. Your nurse for that day will then assess your fitness for treatment.
- There may be a short wait before you see your nurse due to the demands on the service. There may also be a delay waiting for the treatment from pharmacy, particularly if your treatment can only be ordered once you have arrived on the unit and have been assessed (for high-cost drugs).
- **If you feel unwell or have any pain or swelling to the site where the drug is being infused, you must let the nurses know immediately.**
- Teas/coffee etc are provided throughout the day and sandwiches are provided at lunchtime, but you can bring your own refreshments.
- You can use your mobile phone on the unit. Free Wi-Fi is available by connecting to the NHS Wi-Fi.
- It is not advisable to drive yourself home after your first treatment in case of any reaction.
- At the moment we cannot accommodate relatives/visitors in the treatment areas.

## Car parking

- There are designated chemotherapy parking bays. Please ask at reception for a parking permit.

## Blood tests

- Treatment can affect the bone marrow, the kidney and liver function. Sometimes treatment needs to be delayed if blood counts are too low (particularly the white blood cells called 'neutrophils' and 'platelets' for blood clotting), or if other results are out-of-range.
- You will need a blood test **TWO days before each treatment**, unless told otherwise by your consultant/chemotherapy nurse.
- You will be given a pre-treatment blood form at each visit, ready for the next treatment.
- Please arrange an appointment for your blood test. These are the options for where you can get your blood test:
  - Your GP
  - Weymouth Hospital (Mon / Wed / Fri) - 01305 254822
  - The Robert White Centre (Mon to Fri) - 01305 254355
  - District nurses for PICCs or port-a-cath central lines
- You will also have a blood test to check for diabetes or pre-diabetes. This is because steroids and anti-cancer drugs can increase blood sugar levels.
  - signs of this include feeling very thirsty, passing a lot of urine, headaches and blurred vision.

Please report any of these symptoms to your nurse or call the 24-hour Helpline.

## Appointment Queries

For any questions about your appointments or non-medical enquires please call the Fortuneswell Unit on 01305 254359.

## Vaccination Advice

- You can have the flu and covid vaccine injections via your GP, as these are not live vaccines (inactivated). Ideally, these should be given prior to starting treatment, or 2-3 days before the next treatment cycle is due.
- You must not have live vaccines whilst on cancer treatment and for some months afterwards.
- If you have a blood cancer or have received a bone marrow transplant, please discuss with your haematology consultant or specialist nurse.

## Further Information and Support

### NHS Community Oncology Support

- 'Right by You' is an NHS support service project for patients with a cancer diagnosis that live on Portland. You can self-refer by emailing [angela.ingram@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:angela.ingram@dchft.nhs.uk) or call 07796 938707.
- There is also support for patients in North Dorset with the Community Oncology Nurses - referral via the chemotherapy nurses.

### Financial/benefits Advice

- Dorset Macmillan Citizens Advice Service - 0845 490 0042  
[www.macmillan.dorchester@cacentral.org.uk](mailto:www.macmillan.dorchester@cacentral.org.uk).
- Dorset Cancer Care Foundation - grants for people who are experiencing financial hardship due to cancer [www.dccf.co.uk](http://www.dccf.co.uk). Self-referral.
- Blue badge - referral via your Cancer Support Worker.

### Smoking and Alcohol Cessation

- Live Well Dorset: [www.livewelldorset.co.uk](http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk)

### Support for Younger People

- Willow Foundation – offers special days and breaks away for people between 16 and 40 years old who have a life-threatening diagnosis.  
[www.willowfoundation.org.uk](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk) - referral via chemotherapy nurses.
- Shine Cancer Support – support for young adults who have experienced a cancer diagnosis.  
[www.shinecancersupport.org](http://www.shinecancersupport.org) - self-referral.

### Local Support Groups

- C-siders, Weymouth and Portland: [www.csiders.org](http://www.csiders.org)
- The Living Tree, Bridport: [www.thelivingtree.org.uk](http://www.thelivingtree.org.uk)
- The Purbeck Workshop, Wool: [www.purbeckworkshop.org](http://www.purbeckworkshop.org)
- Axminster and Lyme Support Group: [www.axminsterandlymecancersupport.co.uk](http://www.axminsterandlymecancersupport.co.uk)
- Stalbridge Cancer Recovery Support:  
[www.stalbridgecancerandrecoverysupport.co.uk](http://www.stalbridgecancerandrecoverysupport.co.uk)
- Forum Otters Cancer Support, Blandford: [www.cancercaremap.org](http://www.cancercaremap.org)  
[forumottersuk@gmail.com](mailto:forumottersuk@gmail.com)
- Dorset Carers Hub, Dorchester: [www.dorsetcarershub.com](http://www.dorsetcarershub.com)
- West Dorset Breast Cancer Support Group: [www.helpandkindness.co.uk](http://www.helpandkindness.co.uk)

## Exercise Classes

- C'Fit, Weymouth: [www.csiders.org](http://www.csiders.org)
- Stepping Out, Bridport: [www.steppingoutbridport.co.uk](http://www.steppingoutbridport.co.uk)

## Look Good Feel Better

Wellbeing workshops and classes to help people living with cancer.

<https://lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk/>

## Accessing Information

- We can provide large print information and information in other languages, including interpreting services.

## Useful Websites:

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

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

## About this leaflet:

Author: Abby Tindall, Advanced Clinical Practitioner Oncology  
Gemma Hannaford, SACT Clinical Nurse Specialist  
Written: November 2022  
Updated and Approved: February 2025  
Review Date: February 2028  
Edition: v2

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [patientinformation.leaflets@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:patientinformation.leaflets@dchft.nhs.uk)



**INTEGRITY | RESPECT | TEAMWORK | EXCELLENCE**

© 2025 Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2JY  
[www.dchft.nhs.uk](http://www.dchft.nhs.uk)