

Cancer services

Open Access Follow-Up (OAFU)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

We are sending you this leaflet as you are now starting on the Open Access Follow-Up (OAFU) programme at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, following completion of your cancer treatment. We hope it will answer many of the questions that you or those who care for you may have at this time, and supplement the conversation you have already had about OAFU with one of your doctors or nurses.

What is OAFU?

OAFU is a monitoring service delivered by Imperial College Healthcare for patients who have completed cancer treatment and are suitable for self-managed follow-up. Routine follow-up appointments in clinic are replaced with 1-2 scheduled calls per year with our team of cancer support workers (CSWs) alongside any necessary scans or blood tests. Additionally this service enables patients and their GP to report any worries, concerns or new symptoms via a dedicated helpline or email. The helpline is available during working hours (08.00 to 16.00, Mon-Fri) with a response within 1 working day if no-one is available to respond immediately. Emails should be responded to within 2 working days. The CSWs work in partnership with the clinical team so patients may be booked in for a call with a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or offered an appointment if needed.

How does OAFU work?

Your consultant will refer you to OAFU once you have completed your initial cancer treatment, and you will then be given a consultation with a doctor or nurse, who will cover the following topics:

- diagnosis and treatment
- any medication and possible side effects
- arrangements for follow-up tests and /or scans and how results will be communicated
- body awareness as well as related health, lifestyle and wellbeing advice
- sources of further help and support
- Signs and symptoms to look out for and how to contact the OAFU team (please see insert). It is important that any of these symptoms are reported via the dedicated helpline - this can also be done by a GP or next of kin.

Other reasons to contact the OAFU helpline

You should contact the helpline if you:

- have questions about the side effects of your medication or treatment
- have changed address or telephone number – it is really important that the contact details we have for you are correct
- have not had an appointment for your investigation(s) and it is now due
- are finding it difficult to cope and/or if you would like some emotional support

Further help and support

People experience different feelings when they no longer need to see their medical team. Some feel relieved that their lives are no longer disrupted by appointments, whilst others are concerned about the future and anxious about losing contact with the hospital. Many people also worry that the cancer may return. These feelings are all very common and there are many organisations that provide help and support to people who have or have had cancer. Your CNS will give you information about these. Alternatively, your GP may be able to arrange counselling for you. If it would be helpful, we can put you in touch with our hospital multi-faith chaplains who would be happy to talk to you about any spiritual questions you may have.

How can I find out more about OAFU?

If you have any questions, please get in touch via the helpline (**020 3312 3426**) or email and a member of the team will be in touch as soon as possible.

Monday – Friday, 08.00 – 16.00 (Closed on bank holidays)

- **Breast:** Imperial.OAFUbreast@nhs.net
- **Prostate:** Imperial.OAFUprostate@nhs.net
- **Colorectal:** Imperial.OAFUcolorectal@nhs.net
- **Gynaecological:** Imperial.OAFUgynae@nhs.net

How do I make a comment about my visit?

If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department: Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY
Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net