

Cancer services

# 6 West Chemotherapy Day Unit

Information for patients, relatives and carers



## Important information

- **Address:** Chemotherapy Day Unit, Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF  
**Main block, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, 6 west ward**
- **Opening hours:** 9:00am to 7:00pm, Monday to Friday
- **Appointments:** 0203 311 5190 / 0203 311 1347 (Weekdays 9:00am to 5:00pm)
- **24-hour helpline:** 07788 531 677
- **Macmillan navigator service (non-urgent):** 0203 313 0303 (Weekdays 9:00am to 5:00pm)
- **Hospital transport:** 0330 678 1245

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Chemotherapy Day Unit. We understand that this is probably a new and unfamiliar experience for you. This guide is to help you understand what we do and what to expect.

Before you come in for your appointment, please read the treatment information that your doctor gave you during your clinic visit. This explains what treatment you are having and the potential side effects.

If you did not receive this in clinic, or would like another copy, tell your clinical nurse specialist know before your appointment or the chemotherapy nurses at your appointment.

If you have any questions about your treatment or need clarification, please ask our chemotherapy nursing staff on the day of your treatment appointment.



## Blood tests

You will need to have a blood test before your treatment day. This is to check your blood counts are satisfactory to go ahead with treatment.

Depending on your type of cancer therapy, this will be between one and seven days before your appointment for treatment. Your chemotherapy nurse will tell you when you need to have your next blood test. You can either book this yourself or call the department to book.

See the link and telephone numbers at the end of this leaflet for information on how to book blood tests.

You may also see a doctor or nurse on the same day as your blood test. This is so they can check you are well enough to have treatment.

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## What will happen on treatment day?

**The Chemotherapy Day Unit can be very busy; we treat around 70 patients every day. For this reason, it is important that you arrive at your allocated time.**

- when you arrive at the Chemotherapy Day Unit, there is a sign showing you where to **check-in** with our reception team. They will ask your full name and date of birth. You don't need to bring any documents to confirm your identity.
- the nursing team will do some **pre-treatment assessments**, which will include checking your weight. This is to make sure you are well enough to have treatment.
- we aim to treat you at your allocated time; however, we recommend that you are free for the whole day as there can be delays. We will make sure to keep you updated with the estimated waiting times on the day.
- the **waiting area** is in the Chemotherapy Day Unit reception, but you can also wait in the Maggie's Centre. We will give you a pager or buzzer to notify you when your treatment is ready. There will be **hot drinks and water** in the reception area in the Chemotherapy Day Unit and in the Maggie's Centre.
- you can eat **breakfast or lunch** before your appointment. We will provide sandwiches for lunch, which includes a vegetarian option. If you have any special dietary requirements, or any allergies, please let us know.
- once your treatment is finished your nurse will give you instructions on **home care**, including how to minimise potential side effects. If you need medication to take home, your treating nurse will give it to you, or we'll ask you to collect it from Rowlands pharmacy on the ground floor. We'll give you an orange card with your details on to show to the pharmacy.
- we will write your **follow up appointments** in your chemotherapy booklet.
- we recommend that you arrange for **someone to take you home**, especially after your first cycle.
- **visitors** can't come into the chemotherapy treatment area. This is due to limited space and for the privacy and safety of all patients. Visitors can wait in the waiting area, but please note that children are not allowed.

**Please be aware that the Chemotherapy Day Unit is a mixed unit for all genders.**

## Treatment administration

Treatment for cancer can be given in different ways. This depends on your type of cancer and your doctor or nurse will discuss the most appropriate option for you. This could include:

- By mouth – as a tablet, capsule or liquid
- By injection – directly under the skin (subcutaneous) or into the muscle (intramuscular)

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By intravenous injection – this will either be given:

- through a cannula, which is a small hollow flexible plastic tube we insert into your vein and then remove at the end of each visit
- through a peripherally inserted central catheter (known as a PICC line), which is a longer plastic tube inserted into a vein in your arm – this tube stays in your arm for the rest of your course of treatment
- or through a port (otherwise known as an implantable Port-a-Cath), which sits underneath the skin of your chest – we insert it under sedation or general anaesthetic and it stays in your chest for the rest of your course of treatment

Some treatments will be a combination of these options.

For most cancer treatments, you'll need supportive medicines. For example, we might give you anti-sickness medication before the cancer treatment.

## What to do if you are feeling unwell?

When you attend the Chemotherapy Day Unit for treatment, the nurses will give an alert card with the number of a 24-hour helpline. Please keep this card on you at all times.

**24-hour helpline number: 07788 531 677**

**Contact the number immediately if you:**

- have a temperature of 37.5°C or above or below 36°C
- feel shivery or have flu-like symptoms
- generally feel unwell

If you have chest pain or difficulty breathing, you need emergency medical attention and you must call 999 immediately.

For non-urgent queries, you can contact the Macmillan navigator service. It is a single point of contact for cancer patients, they can help connect you with your clinical nurse specialist (CNS), or other support services. They are available Monday-Friday (09.00 to 17.00) on 0203 313 0303.

## Parking permits

Parking permits are only available for patients receiving intravenous therapy (treatment through a drip), on the day of treatment.

Please let the reception team know if you need a parking permit. We can give you the permits in advance once we have booked your treatment dates.

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## Scalp cooling

We offer scalp cooling to help protect your hair follicles while you have chemotherapy, which may help reduce hair loss. Not all chemotherapy treatments require scalp cooling. For more information about whether this is suitable for your treatment, please talk to your chemotherapy nurse.

## What to bring with you to your appointment

**When you come for your treatment in the Chemotherapy Day Unit, we recommend that you bring the following with you:**

- entertainment – bring something with you to help pass the time, such as a book or media device. If you are using your phone or media device, please bring earphones with you.
- refreshments – sandwiches are provided for lunch, but please bring any other snacks and drinks you want. We ask that you do not bring hot food or food with strong smells. It can make other patients feel sick and we do not have facilities to heat up food.
- Regular medications – please bring with you any medicines that you might need to take throughout the day.

## Booking your blood test

Your blood test can be done at Charing Cross Hospital or Hammersmith Hospital, depending on which is easier for you.

Please scan the QR code below to schedule your blood test or if you're unable to do this, please contact the staff on the following numbers:

Clinic 8 - Charing Cross Hospital  
1<sup>st</sup> floor – West Wing  
08.30-16.30  
0203 311 1298

Oncology Outpatients – Hammersmith Hospital  
Ground Floor - Zone C  
09.00-16.30  
0208 383 8104



Find out more about our cancer services and how to book blood tests at [www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-services/cancer-services](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-services/cancer-services) or by scanning this QR code with your phone.

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## How do I give feedback?

We want to hear your suggestions or comments. Your feedback helps us provide the best service. You can always speak to a member of staff.

You can also contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 020 3312 7777 (10.00 to 16.00, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays) or email at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net). The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or questions and they can help solve problems.

You can make a complaint by ringing 020 3312 1337 / 1349 or emailing [tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:tr.Complaints@nhs.net). The address is Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY.

## Other ways to read this leaflet

Please email us at [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net) if you need this leaflet in a different format. This could be large print, Easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in a different language.

Cancer services  
Published: October 2025  
Review date: October 2028  
Reference no: 5309  
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