

Your journey with the ACU

Welcome to the Sainsbury Wing

The Sainsbury Wing at Hammersmith Hospital is home to our Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU). This specialises in providing chemotherapy and treatments for patients diagnosed with Haematological (blood) diseases. Our compassionate staff are dedicated to ensuring you receive professional and personalised quality care throughout your treatment journey.

Within the warm and welcoming environment of the Sainsbury Wing, you'll find the ACU is designed to make your visits as comfortable as possible. Our welcoming spaces allow you to receive treatment in a relaxed setting. We understand this can be an uncertain time and want to put you at ease while our skilled team attends to your needs.

As you read through this leaflet, you'll learn more about our ACU, the care you can expect to receive here, and the experienced professionals who will support you. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions – we are here to provide care, guidance and reassurance every step of the way.

Introducing the ACU team

During your time at the ACU you will be supported by a dedicated team of trained professionals. Our small yet specialised unit comprises:

- Ambulatory care manager and senior charge nurse – overseeing the ACU to ensure you receive seamless, comprehensive care.
- Hematology clinical nurse specialist – an expert nurse who specialises in hematological cancers and treatment. They serve as your clinical point of contact throughout your patient journey.
- Chemotherapy sisters – our skilled chemotherapy nurses, with extensive training in administering cancer treatments and monitoring your progress.

Our team offers a personalised experience where you will get to know the nurses coordinating your care. We believe this continuity and relationship building fosters a supportive environment.

Our clinicians work closely together, combining their specialised expertise to develop an individualised treatment plan tailored to your needs. Feel free to direct any questions or concerns to any member of the ACU team – we are here to advocate for you.

Our opening times

The ACU is open from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday through Friday. However, due to the length of some treatment schedules, our operating hours can extend beyond the standard opening hours.

We make every effort to book your appointments during the standard hours 08.00 to 18.00 window, although longer chemotherapy regimens may mean you have to stay later. Our dedicated staff happily accommodate these extended hours to ensure you receive the full course of treatment required, without interruption.

Feel free to bring reading materials, electronics, additional snacks (meals and snacks are provided) or anything else to help make yourself comfortable during your visit.

Treatment day

Apart from your first treatment day, we'll ask you to come in the day before your scheduled chemotherapy appointment for a pre-treatment blood test. This allows us to review your latest results and ensure you're ready to proceed with therapy.

Before entering the ACU, we'll ask you to use the provided antibacterial hand gel and wear a mask to help prevent infections. One of our nurses will greet you, go over your scheduled treatment plan for the day, and address any initial questions.

To ensure your safety, we'll check your weight, blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and oxygen levels. This is monitoring that's repeated at each visit. We'll also screen for MRSA every three months.

You'll then be shown to a private room where your nurse will go through a 'toxicity screening'. This involves asking about your general health and daily activities to check for any potential treatment-related side effects.

Depending on your prescribed therapy, medications may be given:

- intravenously, through a line in your hand or arm
- orally as pills
- via injections under the skin

Before chemotherapy drugs can be administered, your latest blood tests are reviewed by your consultant. They can then confirm you're able to proceed with treatment that day.

Our pharmacy will carefully prepare your chemotherapy, you will be administered any necessary pre-medications to prevent reactions. Antihistamines may cause some drowsiness, which is normal. The time it takes to deliver can range from 30 minutes up to 6 hours or longer, depending on your specific regimen. Our staff are here to ensure your comfort during your full appointment.

To help our team improve the service we provide, you will be given a survey to complete electronically before you leave. Your feedback is incredibly valuable. It allows us to identify areas where we can enhance your experience. Please take a moment to share your thoughts – your input is greatly appreciated.

Post treatment

After completing your chemotherapy or other treatment for the day, your nurse will record all the important details in your personal Chemotherapy Handbook. This includes documenting:

- The specific drugs and dosages you received
- Your latest blood test results
- The date and time of your next scheduled treatment appointment
- Any other relevant information

Chemotherapy handbook

Your Chemotherapy Handbook serves as a comprehensive record of your care plan and progress. Be sure to bring it with you to every ACU visit, as it allows our staff to quickly reference your up-to-date treatment information.

We recommend always keeping this handbook on you. You can reference it or share details with other healthcare providers between ACU appointments. Protecting this book is important, as it contains personal health data that guides your treatment regimen.

If you ever have questions about the notes in your Chemotherapy Handbook, don't hesitate to ask your nurse to explain. We want to ensure you understand every aspect of your treatment journey.

Having your handbook on-hand will help our team continue providing the personalised, seamless care you deserve.

We're here for you

The journey you are on takes incredible strength and courage. While dealing with a haematological cancer diagnosis is daunting, you don't have to face it alone.

Your ACU team is here to support you every step of the way with compassionate care and a deep well of expertise. We understand this is a challenging time, and we'll partner with you to manage your treatment path as smoothly as possible.

Please let us know how we can best attend to your needs. Your resilience is an inspiration, and we're privileged to be part of your healthcare journey.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

If you have any suggestions or comments about your experience in hospital, please speak to a member of staff or email us at imperial.private.healthcare@nhs.net or call **020 3311 7700**.

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

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