



PATIENT INFORMATION

Visiting patients in hospital

You have been asked to visit a patient in hospital who is due to undergo treatment very similar to that which you have had. The person you are visiting has requested to meet you and we are very grateful to you for giving your time so generously to help.

This meeting will have been arranged beforehand with the specialist nurse or speech therapist. However, it is important that you inform the nurse in charge of your arrival when you enter the ward, to confirm who you have come to visit and who asked you to visit. Sometimes a patient may be in a single room and there may be special instructions to follow. The nurse will be able to tell you about any special instructions and if the patient is well enough, or free to have visitors.

It will be helpful for the patient to have your name and a contact telephone number for future reference. If you are representing a local support group the details of membership will be valuable. If the patient's partner is not present it may be of benefit to arrange a second meeting that is convenient for you and the patient. We know that partners of patients undergoing extensive cancer treatments can sometimes feel left out, poorly informed and unsupported, and can benefit greatly from talking to someone who has 'been there'.




We do have a quiet area within the ward where you can go to talk privately. Please be careful what you talk about at the bedside.

If the patient you are visiting is unable to speak, the nurses will advise you of the best method of communication. This may involve lip reading, using pen and paper or an electronic aid. Do not be concerned by this. The patient will probably have had a lot of practice with this already, just be patient and ask one of the nurses if you are at all concerned. Do not pretend you have understood when you have not; this can be very frustrating for the patient.

You will probably be asked lots of questions. When you provide an answer be honest and tactful, and if you don't know the answer say so! It is important that you do not try to answer questions about their surgery or hospital procedures, because if you do say how something was done differently for you, this can cause uncertainty and doubt in a patient who will already be very anxious.

A visit from you can be invaluable in giving the patient, and partner, first-hand knowledge to boost their confidence about recovery and life after treatments.

Contacts:

- Julie Hewett/Fahida Manby Head and Neck Specialist Nurses  **(01803) 655044**
- Forrest Ward  **(01803) 655507**
- Sam Gregory Macmillan Speech and Language Therapists  **(01803) 654949**