

PATIENT INFORMATION

Gynaecology – Vulva Cancer

Information Leaflet for Torbay Hospital Patients

Following your diagnosis of vulval cancer you will have been offered the treatment that the Consultant Gynaecologist feels is best suited to your particular needs. The main treatment for this type of cancer is surgical removal of the tissue where the cancer is, ensuring that healthy tissue sits all around the area removed. In some cases it may be necessary to remove the surrounding lymph nodes in the groins. The amount of surgery needed will vary so your consultant will discuss this with you and you will be offered information in the form of a booklet to be able to better understand your operation.

Patients of South Devon Healthcare Trust will be admitted to Wynard ward in Exeter, the gynaecological ward. You will be given further information about your operation, recovery and details of the ward during your visit to the clinic for pre-operative assessment.

Radiotherapy can also be used to treat this disease either before, to shrink the cancer, after, or instead of surgery. This can be given externally which is carried out at Torbay Hospital, or internally which is carried out at Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Most patients only require surgery so you will be given more detailed information about this treatment if it becomes necessary.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

This is the name we use to describe the people involved in your care. It is called this because they all have different jobs but together are the people best placed to give advice about what treatment you receive.

The core members of the team are gynaecologists, radiologists, pathologists and nurse specialists. When the team discuss your case you are able to have feedback from the meeting which will probably happen in your out-patient appointment or by phone if you are not having an appointment in the near future. Please feel free to ask about this.

You are also entitled to a copy of any letters sent to your GP if you would like one.

Our aim is to make this difficult time as problem free as possible for you, so please feel free to discuss any concerns or problems that you may have. All of the people whom you will come into contact with are here to help you. All of your questions and concerns, no matter how simple, are important to you, and so also to us, please do not hesitate to ask the Doctors and Nurses for their advice.

The team concerned with your care will be:

Mr M Singh

He may be involved in your initial investigations and in your long term follow up.

Contact via his secretary on (01803) 654647 during office hours

Mr M Hannemann Gynaecological Oncologist.

He will carry out all surgery required for this condition in Exeter and holds clinics in Torbay Hospital on Mondays

Contact via his secretary at Torbay on 01806 654647 and in Exeter 01392 406614

Dr P Bliss– Consultant Clinical Oncologist.

Dr Bliss will assess your need and suitability for radiotherapy.

Contact via his secretary on (01803) 655385 during Office hours

Dr S Harrison or Dr S Higgins - Consultant Radiologists

Drs Harrison and Higgins interpret scans and x rays taken and report their findings to other doctors involved in your care during the Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings.

Tracy Hill & Bridget Reddy, Debbie Fitzgerald - Clinical Nurse Specialists Gynaecology/Oncology.

Can be contacted on 01803 654627 (answer phone) or bleep via the hospital switchboard on 01803 614567 during office hours, or by prior appointment. They are able to discuss all aspects of your care with you and your family and will liaise with other members of the team on your behalf. They are able to offer support throughout your whole cancer journey.

Suzanne Hill / Jeanette Collings- Support Radiographer. Can be contacted on (01803) 654273

Is able to give you information regarding radiotherapy and will discuss any worries or concerns regarding treatment.

You may find that you have to visit various departments within Torbay Hospital; these are most likely to be:

The Oncology Unit – This is where radiotherapy treatment is given and where the oncology outpatient clinics are held.

Gynaecology Clinic – This is situated in the Maternity Unit and a clinics are held on Monday's for patients who have had a diagnosis of cancer so that your follow up will always be by the specialist gynaecologists.

If you have radiotherapy your appointment will alternate with the oncologists.

Sexuality and cancer:

Living with cancer and the treatments involved may have an effect on a person's self image and ability to function on a sexual and relationship level. In some instances overcoming adversity may actually strengthen a relationship and feelings for each other, for others this is not the case. It may be helpful to remember that, though enjoyable, true physical sex is often less important than feeling wanted, accepted, loved and whole. Some people feel that they should not be concerned with deficiencies in their sex life, that they should merely be grateful for being alive. This is not the case, and if you have any concerns then please feel free to discuss them with your specialist nurse. She is able to offer time and privacy if needed.

Further help, advice and support:

VACO- Vulval Awareness Campaign Organisation

www.vaco.co.uk

Eve Appeal

Butler House 177-178 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7NY Tel: 0207 299 4430

Fax: 0808 802 0019 email: office@eveappeal.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support-Tel: 0808 808 0000

The Lodge Cancer Support Centre-Tel: 01803 656490

Penny Brohn Cancer Care Tel: 0303 300 0118

Women's Health Concern: Offers information and advice on Gynaecological Problems and publish a wide range of leaflets

Tel: 01628 478 473

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.