

Colorectal Cancer Follow-Up Care

Information for patients after completion of
treatment for colorectal cancer

① For more information, please contact:

Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist Team in York

Telephone: 01904 724126

Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist Team in
Scarborough, Telephone: 01723 236258

Contents	Page
What is follow-up care?	4
Why is follow-up care important?.....	4
Follow-up care plan	5
Monitoring your health	6
Results	7
Living with and beyond cancer	7
Finally	8
Explanation of terms.....	9
Questions you would like to ask	10
Teaching, training and research.....	11
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).....	11
Leaflets in alternative languages or formats	12

What is follow-up care?

Following the completion of your treatment for colorectal cancer you will be followed up for five years. To help us make sure you get all the tests you need, we will add you to our remote monitoring system. This will let us make sure you get everything you need at the right time.

Why is follow-up care important?

The aim of follow-up care is to monitor your wellbeing and physical health. Follow-up care, even if there is no recurrence of cancer, is important from a wellbeing perspective.

Cancer support services can help with any physical, emotional, or social problems or challenges you may face in the months or years following completion of your treatment.

From a physical health perspective, follow-up care helps to identify any signs that a cancer may be returning. The possibility of this happening can be some time after completion of your treatment, so you will be followed up for five years. If cancer does return, it could be in the same place or another part of your body.

Follow-up care plan

During the five years, your follow-up care will include:

Test	Timing
Colonoscopy*	Carried out in the first year after treatment.
CT* scans of your abdomen, chest, and pelvis	Carried out at 18 months and 36 months after treatment.
CEA (Carcinoembryonic Antigen) * blood test *See Explanation of terms	Carried out every six months at 6, 12, 18, 24 months and then annually at three, four and five years after treatment.

We will send you letters with dates of scheduled tests and blood forms by post.

For blood tests, please visit one of your local blood taking services, taking your blood form with you. The attached information explains where you can get your blood test done or you can access the list via this link: <https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-of-services/blood-taking-service-phlebotomy/>

The CT department will contact you to book your CT scans.

If any abnormalities are identified following these tests, you will be notified by telephone, or other means as appropriate, and advised of the next steps required.

Monitoring your health

Sometimes cancer can recur and may not always be immediately identifiable at follow-up. You may be the first to notice something different or unusual between your scheduled follow-up tests.

If you notice any changes in your health, please let one of the colorectal clinical nurses (colorectal nurses) know. They can then help identify whether these changes are related to a cancer, the treatment you have completed, or something else entirely.

Signs and symptoms to look out for

- Any unexplained change in bowel habit or bladder dysfunction.
- Persistent bleeding from your rectum and/or increased mucous discharge.
- Persistent abdominal pain, discomfort or swelling.
- Unintentional weight loss.
- Unexplained or excessive fatigue/lethargy.
- Loss of appetite.

Results

Once you have had your blood tests or CT scans, a letter will be sent with your results. Please note CT scan results can take up to three weeks.

Living with and beyond cancer

It is common to experience difficult or challenging emotions, such as stress, depression, or anxiety after cancer treatment. Many people find it helpful to talk about their feelings with others such as family and friends, health professionals, or counsellors. Being part of a support group may also help.

However, if you continue to experience depression, anxiety, or stress over a prolonged period, please ask your colorectal nurse or GP who may be able to refer you for further help and advice.

There is a dedicated Cancer Wellbeing Service in York and Scarborough that provides a wide range of free information and support to patients, their relatives, friends, and carers.

Macmillan Cancer Care Centre at:

York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE,
telephone 01904 721166

Scarborough Hospital, Woodlands Drive, Scarborough,
YO12 6QL, telephone 01723 342606

Finally

Please do not hesitate to contact your colorectal clinical nurse specialist team (colorectal nurse), if you are worried about anything related to colorectal cancer or are experiencing any of the signs or symptoms mentioned above. We are here to support you and help to ease any worries or concerns.

Our regular hours are:

Monday - Friday 8am - 4 pm

Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist Team in

York: 01904 724126

Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist Team in

Scarborough: 01723 236258

Email: yhs-tr.cancersupportandinformation@nhs.net

Out of hours please contact 111 or in case of an emergency 999.

View this leaflet online, please scan the QR code below:

Explanation of terms

Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a test to look inside your bowels and find the cause of your symptoms. A thin, flexible tube with a tiny camera is gently passed into your bottom. You will take a laxative beforehand to empty your bowels. The test is usually done while you are awake, with medicine to help you stay comfortable.

CT scan

A CT scan takes detailed pictures of the inside of your body to help diagnose conditions or check treatment progress. You will lie on a flat bed while the scanner takes images. The radiographer will control the scan from another room but can talk to you throughout.

CEA Blood Test

A CEA test checks the level of carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) in your blood, which can show if cancer is growing, spreading or responding to treatment. A CEA test is often done before treatment to set a baseline and repeated during and after treatment to monitor progress. Please note we do not use CEA alone to diagnose cancer. There are many reasons why your CEA may change.

Questions you would like to ask

You may want to use this space to record any questions you would like to ask your clinical team at your next appointment.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist Team for your area – see contact details on front page.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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