Colorectal
Multi Disciplinary Team

Patient Information
This booklet is for people who have been diagnosed with Colorectal Cancer.

There are many people involved in providing cancer health and social care. This group of people are called a multidisciplinary team (or MDT).

The Multidisciplinary Team is a group of health professionals who are experts in the diagnosis and treatment of colorectal (bowel) cancer.

The purpose of the Multidisciplinary Team is to ensure that you are offered the most appropriate treatment for your cancer.

The Team meet on a weekly basis and discuss all the results from your investigations. This may include all the biopsy results, x-rays and scans of patients newly diagnosed with colorectal cancer. This helps the team to make a decision on your treatment plan.

The decision of the team will be discussed with you at your next appointment and you will be involved in the final decision regarding your treatment. Your GP will also be informed of this treatment plan.

This booklet tells you about the different roles people play in cancer services. We want to help you recognise whether you need help from the different people who can provide care. If you do think you need their help, we want you to understand how you can get it. Not everyone we mention in this booklet will be relevant to you.
Your hospital team can:

- Explain any treatment options you have including any side effects
- Give you time to decide about your treatment
- Talk with you if you are worried or unhappy with any part of your treatment and care
- Provide written information about your cancer and any support services that can help

**Key Worker**

You will be allocated a Key Worker. A Key Worker is a person who helps to co-ordinate your care and is someone you can contact to discuss your diagnosis/treatment plan further. Your Key Worker will be one of the health professionals listed below and may change throughout your treatment. If so, you will be informed of the name and contact details of your new Key Worker.

Your current **Key Worker** is:

Contact number:

Please do not hesitate to contact your Key Worker if there is any aspect of your care that you would like to discuss.
The cancer multidisciplinary team is usually made up of the following members:

**Colorectal Surgeon**

A surgeon is a doctor who does operations to remove all or part of the cancer you may have. Your surgeon will be a specialist in doing operations on your kind of cancer. Surgeons can also do operations to relieve or cure any symptoms (or problems) your cancer is causing.

**Oncologist**

A specialist doctor who treats cancer with radiotherapy (high energy x-rays to kill cancer cells or keep them from dividing and growing) and may also prescribe chemotherapy, which is a treatment with drugs to kill or slow down growth of cancer cells.

**Clinical Nurse Specialist/Colorectal Nurse**

A Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) is an expert nurse in caring for patients and their carers who are living with colorectal cancer. She will provide you with information, support and advice at all stages of your treatment. If you have had surgery that affects how you feel about your image they can offer you information and support to help you deal with this. They can also offer you emotional support or refer you to another service, for example counselling.

Clinical Nurse Specialists work mainly in hospital but can bring together the care you need for your return home. If you don’t have a CNS, your hospital should still have someone that you can talk to.

**Radiologist**

A radiologist is a specialist doctor who is expert in the use of x-rays and scans to diagnose colorectal cancer.

**Pathologist**

A pathologist is a specialist doctor who examines body tissues and organs under the microscope.
**Gastroenterologist**

A gastroenterologist is a specialist doctor who is expert in treating diseases of the digestive system.

**Palliative Care Team**

At any time you may meet people who work in ‘palliative care’. The Palliative Care Team is there to help with any emotional and spiritual needs you have and to help manage pain or other symptoms you may have. Palliative care is available to everyone affected by cancer and is especially important for those people whose cancer cannot be cured. The specialist palliative care team works closely with all those involved in your care to ensure that your needs and the needs of your family are met.

**Research Nurses**

A research nurse is a specialist nurse who is involved with patients participating in clinical trials.

**Clinical Psychologist and UCF Counsellor**

The Clinical Psychologist and the UCF Counsellor work as part of the cancer services team. They provide psychological and emotional support to patients and relatives who have been affected by cancer. Referral to the psychology service can be discussed with a health care professional or you can self refer directly to the counselling service.

**Others who may be involved in your care include:**

**Your GP**

Your GP is in charge of your care in the community and can bring together others to help with any problems you may have. Your GP is available to discuss all aspects of your care.
**District Nursing**

District Nurses are experienced community nurses who work closely with your GP. The district nurse will assess your nursing needs and help arrange other services if you need them. They will also educate and support patients and carers.

You can refer yourself to a district nurse or ask a health professional, family member or carer to do so. Speak to your GP or hospital nurse for contact details.

**Social Worker**

Social Workers aim to help the patient, their family and carers to cope by providing social care and support. By working closely with people with cancer, their families and carers, they aim to provide services to reflect your real needs and wishes and can make a real difference.

Their work includes:

- Assessing for practical care and support needs at home
- Assessing for short or long term stays in residential or nursing care homes
- Arranging advice about finance eg. benefits
- Helping parents with information and ways of responding to their children’s needs eg. explaining what is happening
- Assessing needs and supporting carers especially young carers to make sure that their needs are considered
- Giving you information about support services in your local area.

Your hospital team, GP or district nurse can refer you to a social worker.
Dietician

Dieticians play an important role in managing dietary problems. These may have been caused by your illness or treatment. The dietician will help you deal with any concerns you may have about your diet.

You can ask any of your healthcare team, including your GP or district nurse about referring you for an assessment.

Physiotherapist

Physiotherapy aims to reduce some of the effects of cancer or its treatment. It is often possible for you to improve your quality of life and independence or to manage symptoms. The physiotherapist may use various methods to achieve this.

Occupational Therapist

The occupational therapist aims to help you increase your independence and quality of life. They look at the activities you do on a daily basis and find ways to help you continue with those, which are important to you. You can ask any of your healthcare team about referring you for an assessment.

Chaplain

Illness can raise questions about life and how we make sense of it. It can also challenge faith. Most hospitals, hospices and other healthcare institutions have Chaplains as part of the caring team. Chaplains are there to help explore and meet your religious, spiritual and pastoral needs whether you have a faith or not. Generally they can be contacted through ward staff or the main reception. The Chaplain can also contact other religious or cultural groups in the community to give you further support if you wish.
Cancer Information Staff

These are people who can give you and those who care for you information about cancer. The Macmillan Information Centre is based at the Ulster Hospital and you can drop in or make an appointment to speak to the Information Manager. Remember that your MDT can give you information, especially your clinical nurse specialist if you have one.

Treatment sites

If you require further investigations following diagnosis these may be carried out at other hospital sites eg. Downe Hospital, Lagan Valley Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital.

If you require surgery this will be carried out in the Ulster Hospital.

Some patients may require chemotherapy treatment following surgery. This is carried out in the Ulster Hospital at the MacDermott Unit.

However some patients will require radiotherapy or combined chemotherapy/radiotherapy and this will be carried out at the Cancer Centre in Belfast City Hospital.
The names and telephone numbers of the professionals currently involved with your care are listed below. This may change as you progress through your treatment. You may wish to add additional names to this list as required.

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If you require more information contact your Key Worker or you may wish to use the following links:

**Northern Ireland Cancer Network**
www.cancerni.net

**Beating Bowel Cancer**
www.beatingbowelcancer.org

**Macmillan Information and Support Centre**
Ulster Hospital, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Telephone: **(028) 9055 3246**

**Macmillan Cancer Support**
www.macmillan.org.uk

**Ulster Cancer Foundation**
Freephone: **0800 783 3339**
E-mail: ucf.info@ulstercancer.org
This information can be made available on request in alternative formats and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

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