

## Patient information factsheet

# Gastrointestinal (GI) late effects of cancer service

We have given you this factsheet because you have been referred to our gastrointestinal (GI) late effects of cancer service. It explains what our GI late effects of cancer service is, what we offer and what happens next. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

### What are late effects of cancer?

The number of people surviving cancer has tripled in the last 30 years, but not all these people are living well. Although most cancer survivors will not experience any long-term side effects from their cancer treatment, some people will develop late effects. Late effects are side effects that do not go away after cancer treatment. They can also be side effects that do not happen until months or years after treatment.

Late effects can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life. They can also lead to feelings of despair and isolation due to the loss of continual support from a cancer care team.

### What is the GI late effects of cancer service?

Our service cares for and supports cancer survivors who are experiencing long-term digestion and bowel function problems as a result of their cancer treatment. Examples of GI late effects include:

- chronic diarrhoea (persisting for a long time or constantly recurring)
- bowel incontinence
- pain
- rectal bleeding
- excessive wind (flatulence)

Our service is based at Southampton General Hospital and is run by a specialist team made up of a:

- consultant colorectal surgeon
- dietitian
- Macmillan GI late effects clinical nurse specialist

Our specialist team can:

- assess and monitor your symptoms
- arrange tests to check your symptoms
- offer information, support and advice on what you can do to help manage your symptoms
- tailor treatment to your individual needs

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## What happens next?

A member of our team will have contacted you already to explain how to prepare for your first clinic appointment with us, including how to fill out the questionnaire(s) enclosed. Please bring your completed questionnaire(s) with you to your appointment (unless you have completed it digitally on My Medical Record). This will help us to better understand your symptoms and how they are impacting on your life.

At your first clinic appointment, we will give you time to talk through your symptoms in detail with us and explain which symptoms are the most important to you as an individual. As part of your care plan, we may refer you to other specialist teams within the hospital. However, we will always follow up these referrals to provide you with familiar support and continuity.

After this first appointment, we will arrange regular follow-up appointments for you, so we can re-assess your symptoms and adapt your care plan as needed. We have included our contact details at the end of this factsheet if you need any advice or support between your appointments.

## Your feedback

Your feedback is very important to us. It can help us to praise good practice and identify areas for improvement. If you would be willing to provide some feedback, please let us know.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Macmillan GI late effects clinical nurse specialist

Telephone: **023 8120 3789** (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 7.30am to 5.30pm)

Email: **LateEffectsService@uhs.nhs.uk**

## Useful links

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/gastroenterology/gastrointestinal-physiology-and-motility](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/gastroenterology/gastrointestinal-physiology-and-motility)

[www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/after-treatment/late-effects-of-treatment](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/after-treatment/late-effects-of-treatment)

[www.prda.org.uk](http://www.prda.org.uk)

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **[www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport)**