

Children's outpatient parenteral antimicrobial therapy (OPAT)

Information for children, families and carers

We have given you this factsheet because your child may be able to have their antibiotic treatment at home. This is known as outpatient parenteral antimicrobial therapy (OPAT). We hope this factsheet will help to answer some of the questions you may have about OPAT. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

Who can have OPAT?

OPAT can be used to treat young children with a range of severe infections, without the need for a long stay in hospital.

This service is for children who are clinically well but need to carry on having intravenous (IV) (through the vein) antibiotics for longer than a week and can be safely cared for outside the hospital. Not all children will be suitable for this service and we may decide that this is not the right option for your child.

Who will give my child their IV antibiotics?

In many cases, your local community nursing team will give your child their IV antibiotics at your home from Monday to Friday, and at your local ward or ambulatory clinic at weekends.

In some cases, we may be able to train you to give your child their antibiotics yourself before they leave hospital. For children who are being treated with complicated antibiotic therapy, we use innovative pumps known as 'elastomeric devices' to give antibiotics continuously over a 24-hour period. We will discuss this with you in more detail, if appropriate.

Before your child leaves hospital

Before your child goes home from hospital, they will need to have a secure IV line (a thin flexible tube) inserted into a vein in their arm. It may be a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) or a midline. This is so that we can give antibiotics through one of the large veins in your child's arm over a longer period of time. It will also mean they should be able to leave hospital sooner. Depending on your child's age and needs, we will either use a local anaesthetic to numb their skin or give them a general anaesthetic (medication that sends you to sleep) before we insert the line. For more information about having a PICC or midline, please read the separate factsheet we have given you.

Monitoring your child

Along with your child's antibiotic therapy, we will also take weekly blood tests (via their IV line) to monitor your child's progress.

Your child will have a weekly appointment with the OPAT nurse. This may be a face-to-face appointment at the paediatric ambulatory clinic or a telephone appointment. During this appointment, the OPAT nurse will assess your child and give you their weekly CIVAS (pre-made antibiotics). Please note that if the appointment was via telephone, your child's CIVAS will be delivered to your home address. You can then give these to the community nurse or hospital nurse who will be giving your child their antibiotics. The nurse will also ask about your child's progress and give you their test results when they are available.

When will my child finish their OPAT treatment?

When your child has completed their course of IV antibiotics and/or their test results show that the antibiotics can be stopped, we will remove their PICC or midline. We will discuss this decision with your child's lead consultant before we remove the line.

If your child needs to carry on having oral antibiotics (suspension or tablets), we will supply these. Your child's referring consultant will continue to follow up with them as needed.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Community nurses (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm)

We will provide you with contact numbers for the community nurses before your child leaves hospital.

Paediatric OPAT team (sometimes referred to as pOPAT team)

Telephone: **07776 497313** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm and weekends, 9am to 1pm)

For any **urgent concerns** outside of these hours, take your child to your nearest emergency department or call **999**.

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone 0800 484 0135 or email PFSH@uhs.nhs.uk

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport