

# Following Colorectal Cancer surgery

Following colorectal cancer surgery, you will usually follow a structured surveillance programme. The follow-up will be set out in intervals. This leaflet is a brief outline of colorectal cancer follow-up. However, some people may have a variation to this pathway following discussion with their consultants.

## Who will my follow-up be with?

Initially you will be seen by your surgeon. The surgeon will either continue to see you in their clinic or will refer you to the Colorectal Nurse Specialists, who will see you periodically in the nurse-led cancer follow-up clinic.

If you experience any post-operative complications or problems with your follow-up, the specialist nurses can discuss your case with the surgeon to address these issues.

## How often will I be seen?

You will be contacted by telephone every six months during the first and the second year. You will have a telephone appointment every 12 months at the third, fourth, and fifth year. Face to face is available on request.

## What about blood tests?

We will ask you to have blood tests done every three months during the first two years and every six months for the third, fourth, and fifth year. You may not have an outpatient appointment when your blood test is due, but the colorectal nurse will give you a blood test form to take to your GP or the blood test department at the hospital when it is due.

The blood test is a 'tumour marker' used in bowel cancer. It is called a CEA, or carcinogenic embryonic antigen. The blood test alone does not prove anything is wrong, so if you have a raised result please do not worry that the cancer has come back.

It may be that we need to repeat the blood test, do an earlier scan, or talk to your consultant about your case.

### **When will I have a scan?**

You will usually have a CT scan at 12 months and again at two years.

### **When will I have a colonoscopy?**

You will usually have a colonoscopy at the end of your first year and again at the end of your fourth year. A colonoscopy will usually be carried out every five years until after your 75th birthday. However, this can change depending on your health at that time. If there are small polyps within your large bowel, they will be dealt with at the time of the procedure.

### **What else will be discussed at the nurse-led clinic?**

The nurse-led clinic will provide you with the opportunity to discuss any problems relating to urinary, sexual, and bowel function after surgery, and any other problems you may have following your bowel cancer operation.

If you have any questions about colorectal cancer follow-up, you can contact the colorectal nurses at:

Doncaster Royal Infirmary on 01302 644365.

### **Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)**

The team are available to help with any concerns, complaints or questions you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

#### **The contact details are:**

**Telephone:** 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059

**Email:** [dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net](mailto:dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net)