



A guide to...

Support for self-managed follow-up for prostate cancer

Patient and carer Information

How to contact us

Urology Department
Watford General Hospital
West Hertfordshire NHS Trust
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Hertfordshire
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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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Supported Self-Managed Follow-up arrangements for patients who have completed treatment for prostate cancer

Why have you been selected for support self-managed follow-up?

You have been selected for the supported self-managed follow-up because the prostate clinical team believe this is the best way of keeping a close eye on your recovery following your cancer treatment. A computerised system allows them to monitor the results of your regular tests and recall you quickly to hospital in the event of any concern. It gives you the freedom to get on with your life, but with the reassurance that there are specialist clinicians monitoring your progress and a fast way back into the hospital should you need to.

About supported self-managed follow-up

A dedicated **Urology Clinical Nurse Specialist** uses a special computerised system to monitor your test results and to call you back into hospital if they feel you need further tests or investigations. The system records and monitors your test results and alerts the team if there are any changes that need further investigations or treatment. The system is checked on a weekly basis by the Urology Clinical Nurse Specialist.

The regular tests you will need

Following your treatment for prostate cancer you will need to have regular PSA tests. Your consultant will advise how often you need to have these done, but it is usually every 3 to 6 months, other tests that might be undertaken are MRI scans and biopsies depending upon the treatment you have had and your progress beyond this point.

How supported self-managed follow-up works

When your PSA is due you will receive a letter with a blood form attached asking you to book yourself a blood test at the hospital. The results of your PSA level will automatically be recorded on the follow-up computer system and will be checked carefully by the relevant clinical staff.

If your results are within the range that is normal for you, you and your GP will receive a letter confirming this. With the self-managed follow-up, you will not routinely be called for follow-up appointments at the hospital if your results are normal and you are symptom free.

If there are concerns about your test results you will be telephoned to discuss this and you will receive a letter offering an appointment to attend clinic within 14 days. Your GP will also be informed.

Supported self-managed follow-up contact:

Leave a message if you have any concerns about your prostate cancer or are suffering from one or more of the symptoms listed below. The number is **01923 436651**. The telephone number line is checked several times a day Monday to Friday. The CNSs will respond to your call within two working days

About PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) Levels

The best way of identifying that you may need more treatment for your prostate cancer related problems is through a 'PSA test'. This is a simple blood test which can be taken at your GP surgery or at the hospital. PSA is a protein gland, which naturally leaks out into the blood. The PSA test measures the level PSA in your blood. Sometimes a raised PSA level can be a sign of prostate cancer or its return. However, it can be caused by something less serious like:

- An infection
- Exercise
- Ejaculation
- Cycling

Following the PSA test, your blood test will be sent to the pathology laboratory for checking and the results will be review in the electronic system by the relevant staff. If the PSA results are within the range that is normal for you, you will receive a letter from the clinical team confirming this and when your next PSA is due. You will not be routinely called for a follow-up at the hospital if your PSA levels are normal and you are symptom free

Signs and symptoms to report

Everyone is different and it's you who knows your body best, so we would much rather you telephone the Urology Cancer CNS's telephone number with a concern that turns out to be nothing than have you sitting at home worrying. The sooner you share your symptoms or concerns with us, the quicker we can help to resolve the problem.

The symptoms below could indicate a return or spread of the disease and need further investigations:

- Stiffness or frequent soreness in areas such as the lower back, hips or thigh
- Swelling in the legs or pain in the pelvic region
- Bone pain that does not stop
- Unexplained weight loss

If you experience any of the above symptoms, please contact the Urology Cancer CNS on **01923 436651**

If your symptoms are particularly worrying, especially in the case of sudden heavy bleeding, or severe and persistent abdominal pain, you should contact your GP immediately or go straight to the hospital Emergency Department.

Benefits of the supported self-managed follow-up system

- You will not have to make unnecessary trips to the hospital at times when you are symptom-free and getting on with your life
- You can phone the Urology Cancer CNS phone number with any concerns or symptoms relating to your prostate cancer and receive a call back within two working days
- You no longer have to take time off from work or pay travelling or parking charges for outpatient appointments that you do not need.
- You should receive an improved experience of care; with the advantage of a Urology telephone number, you can ring if you have any concerns or symptoms relating to your prostate cancer.

Please remember

- If you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, please phone the Urology Cancer CNS telephone number as soon as possible on:
01923 436651
- If you are asked to return for a clinic appointment and are unable to make the date and time given, please telephone the outpatient appointment department on **01727 897122** to rearrange your appointment
- Telephone messages to the Urology Cancer CNS telephone number will be monitored several times a day but they will not be picked up at the weekends or on bank holiday. If you have a prostate-related emergency occurring at the weekend or on a bank holiday, you will need to contact your out of hours GP service or your local Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department.