



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Support from the Head and Neck Cancer Nurse Specialists

Patient information

What kind of telephone support can I expect?

The Head and Neck Cancer Nurse Specialists (also called your 'Key Worker' or Specialist Nurse) provide support to patients and their carers/families. This support may include discussing issues around diagnosis, treatment options, symptom problems or access to other healthcare services. Your specialist nurse will explain what they are able to offer to you.

How will I know who to phone?

You will be given the name and contact details of your specialist nurse, usually by the nurse themselves when you first meet them, or by the doctor in the clinic. Their contact details are on their service information leaflet and their business card.

Will my specialist nurse always pick up the phone when I ring?

It is not always possible for the specialist nurse to be at their desk to respond to telephone calls immediately. They may be in a clinic seeing patients or their relatives. They may also have teaching, or have other commitments which mean they are busy elsewhere. Your nurse will advise you of their hours of work. The specialist nurses have an answer phone, or voicemail facility and they will encourage you to leave a message for them with your full name and telephone number. Providing your date of birth is also useful as it helps to identify your records quickly. You may find it helpful to have a pen and paper with you when you contact your specialist nurse so that you can write down any information or alternative contact details they provide in the answer phone message.

How will I know when I will be called back?

Your specialist nurse will advise you of their hours and days of work when you meet them. If you have an urgent problem or enquiry it is helpful if you are able to call before 1pm, Monday – Friday so that your concerns can be addressed. Your specialist nurses will prioritise messages and aim to respond as quickly as possible. However they may not always be able to return your phone calls on the same day.

What about when my nurse is on holiday or away for any other reason?

Your specialist nurse will leave a message on their answer phone informing callers if they are not available for any reason. They will also give the date of their expected return. If they are not available you may want to ring another number for support. The answer phone message contains the details of other departments and organisations who may be able to help with your query.

What if telephoning is not convenient for me?

If it is difficult for you to telephone the specialist nurses they may provide you with their email address. This can be useful for simple queries but sometimes it is hard to answer complex questions or concerns by email. In this situation the specialist nurse may suggest either a follow up phone call or may suggest you meet face to face.

The support worker will at times pick up the telephone or message and call you back to see if she/he can offer help and support and liaise with the nurse specialist.

Useful telephone numbers:

Head and neck cancer nurse specialists

Brighton and surrounding areas

01273 696955 Ext. 67435

or uhsussex.cancernursespecialists@nhs.net

West Sussex

01903 205111 Ext. 86895

or uhsussex.headandneckcancercns@nhs.net

East Sussex

0300 131 4500 Ext. 136218

Head and Neck Cancer Support Group

(local support group for patient and families with head and neck cancers).

www.thancs-brighton.org.uk

Useful website for additional information:

Macmillan Cancer Support

www.macmillan.org.uk

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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