

# Receiving your intravenous (into a vein) antibiotics at home or in the OPAT clinic

**Information for patients carers and relatives**



**This leaflet answers common questions about the OPAT service. If you would like any further information or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to contact your named nurse or doctor.**

# What is OPAT?

OPAT stands for Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy.

It is a service that offers you an alternative to an inpatient stay while you continue your course of intravenous antibiotics.

It is available to anyone aged 18 years or above, plus 16 and 17 year olds who can consent to care being provided by OPAT and who have appropriate social support at home.

## OPAT team

OPAT is a multidisciplinary team that consists of:

- A lead consultant
- A microbiologist
- An anti-microbial pharmacist
- An OPAT sister
- OPAT specialist nurses
- The OPAT nursing team
- OPAT administrator.

## Where is OPAT located?

OPAT is located on level 4 (OPAT/Medical Day Case Unit) opposite to clinic 15.

## Benefits of the OPAT service:

- Reduced length of stay in hospital.
- Reduced risk of hospital acquired infections.
- Avoid hospital admission.
- Promotes independence and helps maintain normal activities.
- Improves quality of life as some patients can return to work.
- Patients feel they have more choice and control over their care.

## We require you to:

- Attend the OPAT clinic as discussed and agreed with the OPAT nurses.
- Seek medical advice as soon as possible if you become unwell at home; please refer to contact details towards the end of this leaflet.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, which requires immediate action (these will be discussed with you by the nursing staff and are also listed on this leaflet).

If you feel you are unable to fulfil these expectations or have any concerns, please discuss this with a member of the OPAT team.

## Once a week

The OPAT nurse will:

- Check and re-dress your line.
- Take your bloods to monitor your progress.
- Provide a new supply of medications, and any required equipment following your weekly review.

As a team we aspire to provide the best possible care and experience for our patients, and with your commitment to your treatment we expect to achieve a positive outcome.

## What happens if I decide not to continue?

If at any time you decide that you no longer want to continue having your antibiotics delivered in this way, then alternative arrangements can be made for re-admission to hospital.

## What happens if I become unwell?

You or a relative/friend **MUST** contact the OPAT team if you start to feel unwell at home. Contact details are towards the end of this leaflet.

Office hours are 7am to 8pm, seven days a week, including bank holidays. Outside of these hours please call 111 or 999.

It is always better to deal with concerns early to prevent further complications which could lead to re-admission to hospital.

# Reactions to medications

Reactions are rare to medications; however, you would usually react to the first few doses given. Reactions can be classified into three groups:

## 1. Mild reactions

These included headaches, chills, fevers, nausea, vomiting, joint or back pains, dizziness, and light headedness. If you experience these, please call the OPAT team.

## 2. Moderate reactions

These may include wheezing, itching or a rash. If other mild symptoms as above are rapidly getting worse or recurring, please call the OPAT team.

## 3. Severe reactions

These may include swelling, tightness of the throat and chest, severe headaches or shaking, severe dizziness or fainting, worsening breathlessness or wheeze, collapse, or chest pains. Call 999. Lie down until help arrives.

**A severe allergic reaction, also known as anaphylaxis, is a medical emergency. Anaphylaxis can happen within seconds, minutes or even hours. Do not wait for your next OPAT visit to be assessed, please call 999 immediately.**

# Contact information

If you or your carer have a concern or query, or simply require more information, help, or support, please contact the OPAT team on 01623 622515, extension 6145.

Office hours are 7am to 8pm, seven days a week, including bank holidays. Please leave a voicemail message if the OPAT team are not available to take your call; someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

If you have any problems that are not related to the treatment you are receiving via OPAT, please ensure you contact your GP surgery.

**Never try to reinsert an IV line that has been partially or completely pulled out.**



## **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email

[sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net)  
or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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