PATIENT INFORMATION
Role of Inflammatory Bowel Disease Nurse Specialist

Introduction

This leaflet explains about the role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist – Inflammatory Bowel Disease at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and the services provided.

What is Inflammatory Bowel Disease?

Inflammatory Bowel Disease is the name given to Ulcerative Colitis (UC) and Crohn’s Disease. They affect about 1 person in every 400 in the United Kingdom. Both are chronic conditions which are not infectious.

The most common age for diagnosis is between the ages of 10 and 40 years although diagnosis can be at any age.

In both UC and Crohn’s there is a higher chance of developing either illness if a close relative has the condition. In 10-15% of cases it may be difficult to distinguish between Crohn’s and UC.

Men and women suffer equally.

What Is A Clinical Nurse Specialist?

A Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) is a senior nurse who has specialised in a particular medical or surgical area and has extended their role and scope of practice.

The CNS for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD Nurse) will work as part of the Gastroenterology team and with other staff within the hospital to provide a high standard of care. By working closely with you they can help to manage your disease.

The IBD Nurse will support patients and carers, provide education and assist them through their journey of care.

What is the role of the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Nurse (IBD Nurse)?

The role of the IBD Nurse is to enhance the service currently provided and to improve communication between the community and the hospital. This will be through advice and support, education, and Nurse Led clinics.

The Consultant caring for you may refer you to the IBD Nurse Specialist who will offer information, support and education about any aspect of your illness or treatment. You will see the IBD Nurse in the outpatient clinic where you will be able to discuss your condition and treatment options.
You may need to make lifestyle changes to cope with your disease – the nurse will help and advise you with this. From time to time you will need to undergo blood tests, x-rays and scans.

The Nurse will be able to explain these to you and provide written information about them. The IBD Nurse will also offer you information about your medication and local and national support groups.

**How do I contact the IBD nurse?**

The help line service is able to deal with any enquiries and problems about your IBD. You can speak directly to the IBD Nurse via the Telephone Help Line — **01284 712611**.

The help line is checked regularly for messages. If the nurse is not in the office, please leave a message on the answer phone, leaving your name, hospital number and contact number.

The nurse will call you back as soon as possible.

**Support During ‘Flares’**

Sometimes people with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (both Crohn’s & Ulcerative Colitis) experience a worsening of their symptoms.

The IBD helpline will give you access to the IBD Nurse who can offer advice and liaise with your Consultant about the changes in your condition. This may result in minor changes to your medication or to ask you to have blood tests or other tests. In some instances you will be offered an outpatient appointment to see either the IBD Nurse or the Consultant.

If you develop a worsening of symptoms during the night or weekends it is important to contact your own emergency GP.

**Follow-Up**

As IBD is a chronic - long term disease there may be a time when your condition is so stable that you may not need routine follow up here at the hospital.

It may then be appropriate for you to go into our Telephone Follow-up System. This would be an agreement between yourself and your specialist consultant and means that you would not need to visit the hospital for routine follow up appointments.

The IBD Nurse would phone you at the designated and agreed interval to review your condition.

You will still be able to phone the Telephone Help Line at any time if you have concerns about your IBD and wish to discuss them with the IBD Nurse.

Your Specialist Consultant may also arrange for you to see the IBD Nurse as an Outpatient as part of your routine follow-up.
**Inpatient Service**

Occasionally people are admitted to hospital for management of the flare-up of their disease. If this happens ask the ward staff to contact the IBD Nurse and she/he will come and see you on the ward and offer you support.

**Finally**

Everyone is an individual and they may have different needs according to their disease, symptoms and treatment. Please do not hesitate to discuss any aspect of your care here at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust with your Consultant, IBD Nurse Specialist or your GP.

**IBD HELPLINE NUMBER: 01284 712611**

The Help Line is checked from 0800 – 1600 Monday to Friday. Please listen to the message regarding the return of your call and what you should do ‘out of hours’. Calls will normally be returned within 48 hours except at Weekends or Bank Holidays.

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