

## **The role of the pituitary multidisciplinary team (MDT)**

The pituitary gland (a special collection of cells) sits below the base of the brain and behind the bridge of the nose, close to the optic nerves in a space called the pituitary fossa.

Receiving a diagnosis of a pituitary condition can be difficult. It is important to remember that if you have been diagnosed with a pituitary tumour, the vast majority of pituitary tumours are benign (non-cancerous). Nevertheless, you may feel overwhelmed, particularly regarding investigations and treatment options. It is likely that you will have many questions you would like to ask. We can assure you that we will strive to offer you the best possible treatment and care.

### **Who are the members of the pituitary multidisciplinary team (MDT)?**

The members of the pituitary MDT are experts in treating and managing pituitary disease. They are involved in decisions about your investigations, diagnosis and treatment. The pituitary multidisciplinary team at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is made up of the following key professionals who care for patients with pituitary disease.

- **Endocrinologists.**

Endocrinologists are doctors who specialise in hormones. Hormones are chemical messages that are produced by special collections of cells called glands. These control and co-ordinate activities throughout the body such as how we use and store energy, how the volume of fluid and the levels of salts and sugar in the blood are regulated. The pituitary gland is sometimes called the 'master gland' because it produces some very important hormones that control all different glands in the body. Depending on the type of pituitary condition you have, the pituitary gland can make too much or too little of certain hormones.

- **Pituitary surgeons**

Depending on the size of the pituitary tumour and the type of hormone it is producing, you may require an operation to remove it. A pituitary surgeon is a neurosurgeon (a surgeon who specialises in operating on the nervous system) who has further expertise in performing operations on the pituitary gland.

- **Neuroradiologists**

The best way to look at a pituitary tumour or other pituitary conditions is to perform a pituitary scan called an MRI. This involves lying still on a bed in a long tube for a short period. A radiologist is a doctor who is an expert in interpreting scans and x-rays; neuroradiologists have further expertise in interpreting scans and x-rays done on the brain and nervous system which includes the pituitary gland.

- **Histopathologist**

This is a specialist doctor who uses a microscope to examine the cells of the pituitary tissue removed during an operation. A histopathologist uses a microscope to closely examine the tissue removed during the operation

- **Clinical oncologists (radiotherapist).**

Although pituitary tumours are not cancerous, sometimes radiotherapy (high energy X-ray treatment) is needed to reduce the growth of the tumour. A radiotherapist is a doctor who specialises in radiotherapy.

- **Endocrine Specialist Nurse**

Debbie Papadopoulou is available if you need information and advice about your condition and treatments. She can help if you are having difficulties with other things such as taking time from work for your appointments.

- **MDT co-ordinator**

Diane Williams provides administrative support and prepares information for the weekly MDT meetings.

- **Key worker**

He/she acts as a point of contact for you and your family throughout your treatment, providing help and advice where needed. For pituitary disease, this usually is our endocrine nurse specialist Debbie Papadopoulou or your named Consultant Endocrinologist. He/she will be very familiar with your case and co-ordinate your care. He/she will also plan your assessments and investigations, and ensure that findings from those investigations and care plans are communicated to others involved in your care.

## **What does a multidisciplinary team do?**

The members of the team meet every week to discuss people with a new diagnosis and to review those who have previously been diagnosed with a pituitary condition. This ensures that plans for your treatment are discussed and agreed upon by all those involved in your care. It also helps to streamline your care and reduce delays to any treatment that you may receive.

Multidisciplinary management of people with pituitary conditions actively improves healthcare through the coordinated decision making and care plans decided by all professional groups involved in your care. It is therefore consistent and you will be treated following agreed, evidence-based guidelines.

## **What happens if I have been diagnosed with a pituitary condition?**

You may have further tests to confirm the diagnosis and/or learn more about your pituitary condition.

Many of the investigations will be done as an outpatient (you will not need to stay in hospital). However, some investigations may require a short hospital stay, usually in a special ward where there are staff with expertise in performing these specialist tests (planned investigation unit). Your doctor and endocrine specialist nurse will talk to you about any tests you might need as and when they are required.

Once your diagnosis is confirmed, we will discuss your case at a multidisciplinary team meeting and decide the best treatment option for you. Depending on the type of pituitary condition you have, the team may offer you one or a combination of the following treatments:

- Medication. This can be a tablet or injection to lower hormone levels if they are too high, or if you are not producing enough hormones, to replace hormones.
- Surgery
- Radiotherapy

Your doctor or endocrine nurse specialist will provide you with the written information about the above treatment options.

## **Will I be able to discuss the recommendations for my care with my specialist?**

Yes. We will also give you time to ask questions and to discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor, endocrine nurse specialist or key worker

## **Do I have to accept the treatment plan?**

No. This is your decision and we need your consent before any treatment is started. It is, however, the treatment which the specialists think would be most appropriate for you.

Other options will be discussed with you and we will give you time to consider these further before you make a final decision.

## **Where will I have my treatment?**

You will have your treatment at one of the following three sites: Charing Cross, St Mary's, or Hammersmith hospitals. Your consultant will inform you which

hospital you will have your treatment at. We will also provide you with a map and explain exactly where it is that you need to go.

Your outpatient appointments will be scheduled between Monday and Friday. **Please remember to bring any medications you are taking with you to all your visits.**

If you would like to reschedule your appointment or have any queries regarding the appointment dates, please contact the outpatient booking centre at Charing Cross Hospital on 020 8383 5000.

### **Can I bring someone with me to my outpatient appointments?**

Yes. It might be reassuring to have a relative or a friend with you for support.

### **What if I have more questions?**

You are welcome to ask any questions you may have about your treatment or care at any time. You may find it useful to keep a notebook handy to write down questions as you think of them. The team will be happy to try to answer any of your queries.

### **Who will be looking after me?**

**Name of your consultant:** .....

Name of his/her secretary: .....

Telephone number: .....

**Name of your Endocrine nurse specialist:** Debbie Papadopoulou

Telephone number: 020 331 11000 bleep 7934

Email [Debbie.peters@imperial.nhs.uk](mailto:Debbie.peters@imperial.nhs.uk).....

Other team members involved in your care:

Name of the team member: .....

Telephone number: .....

Job title: .....

Name of the team member: .....

Telephone number: .....

Job title: .....

## How do I make a comment about my treatment?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any suggestions or comments about your care, the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) are there to help you. PALS team can:

- Listen to your concerns, suggestions and queries, and help sort out problems on your behalf
- Guide you through the services available from NHS
- Help to put you in touch with interpreters
- Contact specialist support services for you

The PALS team is available from 09.00 until 17.00 Monday to Friday:

Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals	020 3313 0088
St Mary's Hospital	020 3312 7777

If you are calling out of hours, please leave a message on the answer phone and a team member will get back to you as soon as possible. **In an emergency, please contact your own GP.**

You may also wish to express your concerns in writing to:

The managing director  
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust  
Trust Headquarters  
The Bays, South Wharf Road  
London  
W2 1NY

### Useful contact numbers

Switchboard: Charing Cross Hospital	020 3311 1234
Hammersmith Hospital	020 3313 1000
St Mary's Hospital	020 3312 6666

Endocrine team secretary 020 3311 1065 (Charing Cross Hospital) or 020 331 34823 (Hammersmith Hospital)

Endocrine Specialist Nurse Debbie Peters  
020 331 11319 bleep 7934

**Information for patients and health care professionals** (including downloadable information leaflets)

[www.imperialendo.com](http://www.imperialendo.com)

## National support group

The Pituitary Foundation

[www.pituitary.org.uk](http://www.pituitary.org.uk)

PO Box 1944

Bristol

BS99 2UB

**Administration line** 0845 450 0376

**Support and Information Help Line** (available Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 5:00) 0845 450 0375

**Endocrine Nurse Help Line** (available Monday evenings from 5:30 to 9:30 and Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 1:00) 0845 450 0377

**Fax line** 0117 933 0910

**Please do not hesitate to contact your doctor, Endocrine nurse specialist or keyworker if you have any concerns about your situation, or if you have any questions about information in this leaflet.**

### Notes and questions

Please use the space below to write down any questions that you would like to ask, or to make notes.

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This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications directorate on 020 3313 3865.