

Self-management programmes for Inflammatory Bowel Disease

As you have been well for some time your doctor feels that you may be a candidate for our 'self management' programme.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a chronic disease with periods of both remission and relapse. It is recognised that pre arranged clinic appointments are unlikely to correspond with periods when you feel unwell and it may then be difficult to arrange extra visits and this could mean delays in your treatment.

Having had IBD for some time you will be aware of the things that make your condition better or worse, and an idea of what drugs work best for you.

What is a self management programme?

This is a programme in which together with a Specialist Nurse we explore the history of your illness, identify the symptoms that you associate with a 'relapse' and draw up an action plan that allows you to start suitable treatment as soon as you feel unwell. This way you manage your disease promptly and hopefully reduce the risk of a serious relapse.

What about my medical care?

You will continue to be monitored by the medical team, but will not receive routine appointments to be seen in an outpatient clinic. Once a treatment plan has been drawn up a copy will also go to your General Practitioner and one will go into your hospital records. This way you can get prescriptions for treatment easily. Every year a member of the hospital team will contact you by letter to ensure that you are still well and happy to continue on the programme. You will also be given the Helpline Number of the specialist nurses to contact if:

- 1 You fail to improve in response to the treatment plan within 5 days
- 2 Your symptoms deteriorate despite treatment
- 3 Relapses occur within two months of treatment reduction
- 4 Rectal bleeding occurs between relapses
- 5 You lose weight unintentionally.
- 6 You experience abdominal symptoms not typical of a relapse
- 7 You experience two consecutive flare ups requiring oral steroid treatment
- 8 You wish to discuss your disease management at any time.

If you need to be seen in the hospital an outpatient appointment will be arranged. In an emergency you be able to contact your G.P in the usual way. You may choose to leave the programme at any time.

What do I do now?

The doctor will book you into the Nurse Specialist clinic where they will go through an assessment of your disease with you and together work out a plan of treatment. If you wish this assessment can be made over the telephone instead of at the hospital but you will need to telephone them on the number below to arrange this. Once a treatment plan has been agreed you will be sent/given a copy along with your GP. You will be sent additional written information on IBD to ensure that you are fully informed about your disease and if necessary we will supply you with some of the required medications.