

GUTSY Newsletter

Issue 6 – North Wales and West Cheshire

June 2010

GUTSY News

Welcome to the latest edition of the GUTSY newsletter. Previous issues have proved popular with GUTSY members; they are also circulated to patients who want to be kept informed but who can't always attend meetings.

You can find more information about GUTSY on the their website www.gutsy-group.org.uk

This issue contains a range of articles which we hope you will find informative and helpful. GUTSY is jointly organised by healthcare professionals and a small steering group of GUTSY members. At meetings you can recognise the steering group members by their red name-badges, please approach them if there is anything you would like to discuss at the meetings. If you have any ideas for the newsletter, website, fund raising or would like to write an article, let us know, telephone or email Janet Robison or Diane Henderson on: 01978 727164/727125

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A Big Thank You!

GUTSY have sent a big thank you to BT Community Connections, who awarded the group a new laptop and a grant of £170 for a year's internet connection. Having access to the internet during GUTSY meetings means that we can demonstrate web-based information. It also means that members who do not have access to the internet at home can access cancer related web-sites whilst at the meetings.



Pictured: Mr J Pye Consultant Surgeon, Brian Lewin GUTSY webpage designer, Diane Henderson PPI Manager

Recommended Website

NHS Choices; your health your choices, is the online 'front door' to the NHS. It's the country's biggest health website and provides information about health choices.

Visit: www.nhs.uk

Just Ask



Mr Pye Consultant Surgeon (pictured) regularly attends GUTSY meetings with members of the surgical centre clinical team: Ann, Stella and Lizzy (Nurse Specialists), Rachel and Beth (physiotherapists), Vicky (occupational therapist) and Jane and Kate (dieticians) are amongst the team who are available to help. During the question and answer session they respond to questions and concerns that people may have about their condition or treatment.

Q: There is a lot of noise in my digestive system since the operation.

A: This is normal but varies from person to person.

Q: My throat is cold, down into the gullet following my operation.

A: This is not a symptom I have come across before.

Q: I still get breathless 3½

months after my operation.

A: If the stomach is now in the chest, the lung function is affected. But 3½ months is a still early days, on average it's a year before people feel back to normal. The body is still adapting up to 18-months following surgery.

Q: It is 18-months since my operation but I still get very tired.

A: This probably won't get better now; it could be age related most of us tire more quickly as we get older.

Q: Is a patient more likely to have chest infections?

A: This varies. If it's early days, the body is more prone to infections. If this is a one-off it may not be connected to your surgery. A lot of things can contribute.

Q: Is the number of cancer cases growing in the West World?

A: The Western diet can contribute to certain cancers; some elements of the western diet contain foods that aggravate the gut. Smoking tobacco and drinking a lot of alcohol are some of the main risk factors for oesophageal cancer in the Western world.

The Emotional Affects of Cancer & Cancer Survivorship

At April's meeting Vicky Symon, Occupational Therapist, spoke about the emotional effects of cancer and how this can lead to stress.



A recent article in the Nursing Times stated that 2-million people in the UK are living with a diagnosis of cancer. Candy Cooley, Head of Hospital and Specialist Education in NHS West Midlands argues that many cancer survivors suffer long term physical and psychological problems following treatment. According to recent research over three quarters (78%) reported experiencing at least one physical condition in the past 12 months, and 62% at least one psychological condition (Macmillan Cancer Support, 2009).

Macmillan believe the survivorship agenda is about saying we must help people not just at the time of diagnosis, treatment and end of life but through the whole journey. This help should not be limited to medical issues; it should mean supporting people with any emotional, practical and financial issues their cancer has caused. It is about supporting the whole individual.

Macmillan has produced an excellent information booklet: *Life after Cancer*

Treatment' which contains practical advice about issues ranging from side effects of treatment, emotional issues, stress, talking about cancer and managing finances. This booklet can be viewed on-line at www.be.macmillan.org.uk.

Copies are also available at the Cancer Information Centres in Wrexham Maelor Hospital and the Countess of Chester. Contact details are listed on page 4.

The Specialist Nurses and other members of the team are also here to provide ongoing emotional support and practical advice for both the person who has undergone treatment and for family members and friends. Do not hesitate to contact them their numbers are listed on page 4.

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An extract from a positive poem by 'J.B.S. Haldane (1964)

'Cancers a Funny Thing'

'My final word, before I'm done,
Is "Cancer can be rather fun".
Thanks to the nurses and Nye Bevan
The NHS is quite like heaven
Provided one confronts the tumour
With a sufficient sense of humour.
I know that cancer often kills,
But so do cars and sleeping pills;
And it can hurt one till one sweats,
So can bad teeth and unpaid debts.
A spot of laughter, I am sure,
Often accelerates one's cure;
So let us patients do our bit
To help the surgeons make us fit'

Praise for Upper GI Cancer Surgical Centre

The Specialist Upper GI Cancer Surgical Centre, at Wrexham Maelor Hospital, which serves patients from across North Wales and west Cheshire, has been awarded a score of 92% in a recent National Cancer Peer Review. The service was set up in 2007 as a partnership between North Wales Trusts and the Countess of Chester to create a centre of expertise and to ensure the highest standard of care for patients requiring surgery for oesophago-gastric cancer. The peer review is designed to provide an independent review of services to ensure that they are as safe, support improvement in the quality of care and the patient and carer experience.

The review team visited the service in January and have issued a very complimentary report about the way the team operates. They noted a number of areas of good clinical practice and commended the critical care outreach clinic and the role of multi disciplinary team that was set up in response to patient feedback, as well as the strong patient involvement in the development of the service and the establishment of the 'GUTSY' support group.

The report states:

"The MDT is an excellent cohesive team with strong leadership, working in partnership with Chester to create a true network of care...reviewers were very impressed with the team's functionality, style, values and results."

What do you think?

Ann Camps Clinical Nurse Specialist is the nominated lead at the Surgical Centre for patient and carer issues. Please contact Ann direct with any concerns, ideas or suggested improvements.

Contact Details

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Help with DIY or Gardening?

Airbus UK workforce at Broughton has a team of volunteers to help with: simple DIY, gardening, shopping. For further information contact Phil Jones, Charity-Challenge on: 07710 339173

