

Melanoma

DEALING WITH THE DIAGNOSIS

The information in this folder is about dealing with melanoma, and is intended for patients who have recently been diagnosed with melanoma, and their families.

This folder contains written information, illustrations and photographs.



GLOSSARY

Benign

A lump or growth, which is NOT cancer. These growths do not grow very quickly, and they do not spread to other parts of the body.

Biological therapy

Cancer treatments which use substances that naturally occur in the body such as interferon or IL2.

Biopsy

A sample taken from the body, often at an operation. The sample is usually taken so that the tissue can be examined by a pathologist, in order to make a diagnosis.

Cancer

A disease in which cells, or lumps (tumours), grow in an uncontrolled way. That is, the lumps tend to continue to grow and may spread elsewhere in the body, and if they are not treated may interfere with the way the body functions or works.

Chemotherapy

The treatment of disease with drugs or chemicals, which kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy may be given by injection, in a drip or as tablets, depending on what form of cancer is being treated. Some types of chemotherapy make patients feel sick, others may cause hair loss. Not all however do either.

Clinical Oncologist or Radiotherapist

These are two names for the same type of doctor. These are doctors who look after cancer patients, who tend to use X-rays or radiotherapy, to treat cancer. They are also skilled in chemotherapy.

Clinical trials

See Frequently Asked Questions – What is interferon? and What is a clinical trial?

Dermatologist

A skin doctor.

Diagnosis

The name given to the illness that a person has.

General anaesthetic

Being put to sleep for an operation.

Malignant

This is another word for cancer.

Medical Oncologist

A doctor who looks after cancer patients who mainly uses drugs (chemotherapy, immunotherapy etc) to treat that cancer.

Melanoma

A cancerous growth which may develop from normal skin or may grow from a mole.

Melanoma in situ

Very early melanoma, which remains entirely in the top layer of the skin (epidermis). This sort of melanoma is curable and should never come back.

BOOKLETS AVAILABLE

THE LEEDS MELANOMA SERVICE

WHAT IS MELANOMA?

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MOLES

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AFTER MELANOMA: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We have made a CD Rom which contains additional information and edited interviews with melanoma patients. There is also a DVD version (for use on computers), which contains 14 full length videos with patients, both are available from www.genomel.org/patients.html

These pages contain information about melanoma for patients and their families. They are meant to be used as additional information to that provided by your own doctor and nurses.

Further information can be found on the website at www.genomel.org

This booklet was partially funded by monies raised by the family of Chris Bargh who died 7th May 2003 of Melanoma.

GLOSSARY

Metastatic Cancer

Cancer which has spread to other parts of the body.

Mole

Harmless or benign growth of pigment cells in the skin.

MRI scan

This is a type of body scan. It is less commonly carried out than CT scans. This sort of scan uses magnets therefore patients are asked questions about hip replacements etc. before the scan. It is important not to take any metal into the scanning room as a result. MRI scans may be ordered for special reasons, for example before an operation, or to investigate something which was not clear on a CT scan.

Nausea

Feeling sick.

Oncologist

A doctor who specialises in cancer treatment.

Oncology

A general term for the study or treatment of cancer.

Pathologist

A doctor who looks at tissue samples taken from the body to make diagnoses. He issues a “report” or “result” which summarises his findings.

Pathological

The appearance of something removed from the body when examined down the microscope, which allows a doctor to make a diagnosis.

Primary cancer

The first cancer to develop from which spread to other parts of the body could occur.

Radiographer

A member of the health care team who takes the X-rays or scans the patient. The radiographer will prepare the “films”, which are the images or pictures produced by the scanner or X-ray machine, for the doctor to look at.

Radiologist

This is a doctor who specialises in reading scans or X-rays: that is in interpreting the findings.

Randomised clinical trial

A study of a drug in which treatment is “randomised”. Half the patients get the “new” treatment and half do not. Who gets the treatment and who does not, is decided randomly, usually by a computer.

RESOURCES

Useful web pages

There are several websites which give good information about different aspects of melanoma:

BACUP – www.cancerbacup.org.uk

Cancer Help UK – www.cancerhelp.org.uk

Cancer Research UK – www.cancerresearchuk.org

Wessex Cancer Trust – www.wessexcancer.org

MARC's Line – www.wessexcancer.org

Macmillan Cancer Relief – www.macmillan.org.uk

BBC health information – www.bbc.co.uk/health

The Cancer Counselling Trust – www.cctrust.org.uk

Marie Curie Cancer Care – www.mariecurie.org.uk

NCRN – www.ncrn.org.uk

Melanoma Study Group – www.melanomastudygroup.co.uk

SunSmart – www.sunsmart.org.uk

Organisation addresses

Cancer Research UK

PO Box 123

London WC2A 3PX

Wessex Cancer Trust

Bellis House

11 Westwood Road

Southampton SO17 1DL

RESOURCES

CD-Rom and DVD

There is a detailed CD-Rom/DVD called “Melanoma – Dealing with the diagnosis”. This was produced by Professor Newton Bishop, and colleagues from St James’s University Hospital in Leeds and from Bradford Royal Infirmary.

The presentation contains text about melanoma, its diagnosis and its treatment. There are video clips showing self examination for swollen glands and clips of patients talking about their own experiences.

There are also photographs of moles and melanomas designed to help patients self examine with confidence.

The DVD version (to be used on a computer) contains 14 videos of full-length interviews with melanoma patients.

We have a CD-ROM which has edited interviews with melanoma patients.

They are both available for purchase, requestable by post from Leeds UK or via email, at a small cost.

We hope that other patients will find it helpful to watch to these videos.

If you would like to obtain this material or have comments for us, please go to:

www.genomel.org

or contact us at
info@genomel.org