

Your medical team (MDT)

The team of professionals that plan and manage your lymphoma treatment and care are known as a multidisciplinary team (MDT).

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We have separate information about the topics in **bold font**. Please get in touch if you'd like to request copies or if you would like further information about any aspect of lymphoma. Phone 0808 808 5555 or email information@lymphoma-action.org.uk.

What is a medical team ('multidisciplinary team' or 'MDT')?

Your medical team (MDT) is made up of different professionals, sometimes from more than one hospital. MDT members each have specialist knowledge in different areas to help offer you the best care and work towards optimal outcomes.

The team meets to discuss and plan your **treatment**. To do this, they take into account your individual needs, general health and preferences. Their decisions are also informed by national treatment guidelines.

MDTs meet regularly, usually weekly. There's a core team of professionals that must be present each meeting, but there are also some other 'allied health professionals' such as psychologists and dietitians, who might also be there. MDTs are the gold standard for care along the cancer pathway, ensuring consistency of care across the country.

Anya Aspinall, Lymphoma Clinical Nurse Specialist

The person who has overall responsibility for your care is a **clinical oncologist** or a **consultant haematologist**.

You have a **key worker** within your MDT, who is your main point of contact for any questions or concerns.

Your key worker

Your key worker is someone within your medical team that you can contact with any **questions or concerns**. They are there to help you **live well with and beyond lymphoma**. You should have a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) to help with any practical, physical, social or emotional needs you might have. Macmillan Cancer Support has more **information about the HNA**.

Usually, your key worker is your lymphoma or **haematology clinical nurse specialist (CNS)**.

You should be given the full name and contact details of your key worker. If you have not been given this information, you can ask your haematology doctor for it.

Which professionals are in a medical team?

In this section, we outline professionals that are likely to be involved in your treatment and care. These are often called **core members of the MDT**.

There are also some professionals who'll only be involved in your care from time to time, as and when they're needed. These are sometimes called **extended members of the MDT**.

Some people within the MDT are known as allied health professionals (AHPs). They have different areas of speciality to doctors and nurses – they work with them to support your physical, social and **emotional wellbeing**.

The MDT is concerned with seeing the individual with lymphoma as a whole – looking at various aspects of their life, including their emotional wellbeing.

Jennifer Woods, Specialist Occupational Therapist

Core members of the MDT

Clinical nurse specialist or specialist nurse in lymphoma (CNS) specialises in looking after people with lymphoma. They can help you understand more **about lymphoma** and its **treatment**. Your specialist nurse (sometimes called a clinical nurse specialist or CNS) is usually also your **key worker**.

Clinical oncologist or clinical haematologist specialises in treating people who have cancer with treatments that don't involve surgery, such as **radiotherapy**, **chemotherapy** and **targeted treatments**.

Haematologist diagnoses and treats disorders of the blood, including lymphoma.

Pathologist looks at tissue and cell samples (for example, from a **biopsy**) under a microscope. They do tests on them to find out what **type of lymphoma** you have.

Pharmacists help make sure that your treatment is safe and suitable for you. This includes about your dose of treatment. They also consider any other medication you are taking and how this might affect or be affected by your lymphoma treatment.

Radiographer carries out **scans**. Some radiographers also give **radiotherapy**.

Radiologist specialises in looking at **scans** to work out what they mean. Sometimes, radiologists take biopsy samples to help diagnose lymphoma.

Other (extended) members of the MDT

Depending on your needs, your MDT might also include some or all of the following professionals:

Dietitian can offer advice on what to **eat and drink**, particularly if you have difficulties with eating, for example, as a side effect of treatment.

Occupational therapist (OT) helps with supporting you to continue to engage with your **day-to-day** activities. This might include giving you information and advice about how to manage **cancer-related fatigue**. They could also suggest changes that could help you at home, such as arranging stair-rails or equipment to help you have a bath or shower.

Palliative care specialist aims to improve your overall quality of life, whether or not you are having active treatment for your lymphoma. A key part of **palliative care** is in helping to manage symptoms such as pain and sickness (**nausea**).

Physiotherapist works with you to help you build up your strength and range of movement. They might also assess you to help you stay safe and able to do things for yourself if you have treatment-related mobility problems.

Research nurse/Clinical research practitioner can talk to you about **clinical trials**. If you decide to take part in one, they are involved in checking your health and progress. You can also ask them any **questions about clinical trials** that you might have.

Your emotional wellbeing

Living with lymphoma can have a huge impact on your mental and **emotional wellbeing**. There are professionals who can support this area of your health.

Complementary therapist uses techniques (such as **acupuncture** or **massage**) that can work alongside your lymphoma treatment to help improve your overall wellbeing.

Counsellor or psychologist can help with feelings about the **emotional impact of your lymphoma**, including how it affects your **relationships** and other areas of your life.

Social worker can help with aspects of **day-to-day life**, like giving you information about how to find out if you are eligible for **financial support**. They can offer support if there are complex issues regarding housing, discharge from hospital to a nursing home, safeguarding concerns and mental wellbeing challenges.

Support worker helps with practical and emotional aspects of living with lymphoma. These might include with concerns about the effect of **treatment side-effects** on your life, as well as things like transport for medical appointments. Support workers are in contact with your key worker to help support you. They might refer you to benefit advisors for **financial support** or **complementary therapies**, as well as signposting to services that can help with cleaning your home. A support worker might also help you to re-gain a sense of 'normality' and routine, particularly once you **finish treatment**.

Medical teams for children and young people

Children and young people aged 16 to 24 have a teenage and young adult multidisciplinary team (TYA MDT). The team consists of the:

- **core members of the MDT**
- any relevant **extended members**
- health and social care professionals who specialise in treating young people with cancer – they can advise the core and extended members of the MDT about the specific needs of children and young people.

Professionals wh work with children and young people

Children and young people's social worker helps address emotional, social and practical needs, for example financial, educational and employment issues.

Play specialist supports children using play to help them through challenges, including processing what has happened and what is happening to them.

Young person's community worker supports young people with building social connections and helps to manage issues relating to education and employment.

Youth support worker can arrange fun and relaxing activities on the hospital ward. They might also organise trips out, away from the hospital environment. This role is sometimes called something else, such as a 'youth support coordinator'.

Frequently asked questions about medical teams that manage lymphoma

In this section, we address some of the questions you might have about medical teams. Talk to a member of your medical team for information specific to your situation.

How do MDTs decide what treatment to recommend for me?

Your medical team recommend your treatment based on a number of factors, including the **type** and **stage of your lymphoma**. They follow national guidelines that set out best practice. They also consider your individual needs and preferences, as well as your overall health.

Will I meet the members of my medical team?

You'll see some members of your MDT regularly, but there are others you won't meet, for example, those who work in a laboratory.

Can I go to an MDT meeting?

It's not appropriate for you to attend an MDT meeting. The discussions are of a highly medical nature. They are also confidential, as members of the team will also talk about their other patients. If you have any **questions or concerns**, however, speak to your **clinical nurse specialist** or other **key worker** – for example, if you want to ask them to take something specific into consideration.

What are the benefits of MDTs?

Having different health professionals taking care of you means that you benefit from expertise of people from different specialities. Their aim is to ensure the highest possible quality of care and **treatment of people affected by lymphoma**.

Who leads the MDT?

Often, a lead **clinical oncologist** or **clinical haematologist**. However, any member of the MDT can chair the meeting.

References

The full list of references for this page is available on our website. Alternatively, email publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk or call 01296 619409 if you would like a copy.

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