

Notes

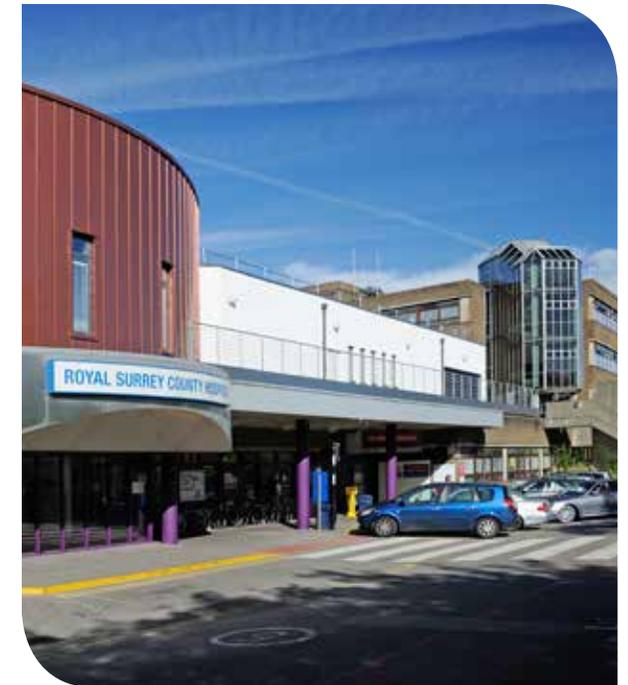
Contact details

Colorectal Clinical Nurse Specialist

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 6376

Routine HIV testing for patients with newly diagnosed anal cancer

Oncology Department



Patient information leaflet

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Future review date: January 2022

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What does HIV screening mean?

In order to offer the best treatment for our patients we routinely take a blood sample to test for the presence of HIV. This is similar to the national routine HIV testing that occurs in pregnant women.

What is HIV?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus which causes AIDS (Acquired immune deficiency syndrome). The virus gradually weakens the immune system, which makes it difficult to fight off infections.

How do you test for HIV?

The HIV test looks for antibodies to HIV. If the test is negative it usually means you are not infected with HIV. However, it can take up to 3 months for antibodies to develop, so if you think you may have been at risk of catching HIV recently, it is important to let us know.

Why is it important to know if I have HIV?

The presence of HIV can result in decreased immunity and a greater risk of complications from treatment for anal cancer such as life-threatening infection. If HIV infection is detected before cancer treatment is started, anti-viral medication can be commenced which means there is less risk of infection or complications. Research shows that patients with HIV and

cancer on anti-viral treatment have similar survival to cancer patients without HIV. If the test is positive we will arrange for your care to be shared with the oncology team and genito-urinary medicine team.

What now?

The blood test will be taken with your other routine blood tests before treatment. The test takes approximately one week and you will be informed of the result by a doctor at your next clinic appointment when it is available.

If you would like further information or counselling before having this blood test please contact Buryfields Sexual Health Clinic on **020 3317 5252** who will arrange an appointment with you. We would be happy to assist you with this if required.

As this is a routine screening test having it done should not affect future insurance applications. All results will be treated with full confidentiality.

What if I don't want the test?

If you do not wish to have this blood test please let your doctor know, you do not have to give a reason.

Key reference sources

- **Ann Oncol.** 2012 Jan;**23(1):141-7.** Epub 2011 Mar 28.
Chemoradiotherapy for anal cancer in HIV patients causes prolonged CD4 cell count suppression.

Alfa-Wali M, Allen-Mersh T, Antoniou A, Tait D, Newsom-Davis T, Gazzard B, Nelson M, Bower M.
- **Oncology Times:**
10 September 2010 - Volume 32 - Issue 17 - p 18- 22

Oncologists urged to screen all cancer patients for HIV infection Keller DM,
- **JAMA.** 2010 Jul 21;**304(3):334-9.**
Time for oncologists to opt in for routine opt-out HIV testing?

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