

Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Department

OPAT : Going home with IV antibiotics Information for Parents and Carers

This leaflet aims to provide you with some information about a service called OPAT.

What is Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT)?

Children can be given antibiotics in different ways: they may receive antibiotics by mouth (orally) or directly into their veins, this is known as intravenous (IV) or parenteral therapy. Some children can receive their IV antibiotics safely in their home by trained and experienced nurses, or by a parent/carer, or at a local children's unit as an outpatient.

When your child can have your IV antibiotics without having to stay in hospital this is called Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT).

Do all children go onto the OPAT service?

This service is not suitable for all children receiving IV antibiotics (for example, not all antibiotics can be given at home or might need to be administered too frequently). Your doctors may suggest the service for your child and the OPAT team will need to check they agree it is appropriate and safe. Even if a child is suitable for OPAT, the child (depending on age) or parents can of course choose not to use the service. It is essential that nursing staff have up to date contact details of parent/carers and where the child lives/stays before consideration for OPAT.

The benefits of the OPAT service

We will try to ensure that the OPAT service is tailored to the individual needs of your child and family. Some children can have treatment provided in their own home, others may need to travel daily to nearly hospital or treatment centre. We will explain the options to you. Children who can continue treatment out of hospital can usually spend more time with their family and friends and some may also be able to return to school or nursery. This may help to speed recovery and reduce pressures on the family.

Potential risks

Before a child goes home their parents will have received all the information they need about medicines and their side effects, as well as caring for the IV lines at home.

- Allergic reactions

It is important to remember that allergic reactions can occur with any medicine at any time.

Children will receive at least one dose of their antibiotic in Alder Hey Hospital to ensure they do not develop a severe reaction at the start of treatment. When at home please seek immediate medical attention if your child develops any of the following symptoms: a rash, facial swelling or difficulty in breathing.

- Intravenous access

However carefully an intravenous line is looked after it will have a limited life and may need to be replaced during the treatment course.

Who will give the IV antibiotics?

It depends on your area and we will discuss with you the available options.

Some areas have Community Nurses who can travel to your home to administer the antibiotics but other areas don't have this facility and you may need to attend your local hospital daily for treatment. Some areas do a mixture and have Community Nurses during the week but you may need to attend your local unit at the weekend. In some circumstances parents/carers can be trained to administer certain antibiotics.

How long will IV treatment last?

This varies from one child to another. A child may need a few days of IV treatment, another child may need several weeks IV treatment.

Reviews of progress

All children are reviewed by discussion in a weekly virtual ward round in the hospital, with feedback from the community team and any recent test results. Some children need to have blood monitoring whilst on OPAT – this will be discussed with you before you go home. The team who looked after your child may ask you to return either during or after your child's treatment for a clinic appointment. Sometimes the planned length of treatment or medicines used may need to change as a result and this will be discussed with you.

Improving the service

Feedback from patients, families and carers allows us to improve the quality of care we provide. After completion of treatment we would like to contact you via telephone or text message, to complete a short survey about your experiences. If you **do not** wish to participate in this please let the OPAT nurse know before your child is discharged home, or contact the team on the number below.

Who to contact for help or further information

The OPAT nurse can be contacted between 8.30am-4.00pm Monday - Friday for advice about treatment or lines: OPAT Office: 0151 228 4811 ext. 3251

If you can't contact the OPAT team call 0151 228 4811 and ask the operator to bleep the IV/OPAT team for you on bleep 652.

If you have a question or problem that cannot wait until the OPAT or Community Nursing Team are available contact the Accident and Emergency Department at Alder Hey or your local hospital.

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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