

### How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 482 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

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# About the Speech and language therapy service

Rehabilitation and Support

**A guide for patients and carers**

## Notes

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This information is for patients who are going to receive chemotherapy or radiotherapy to their head and neck area, or to their brain.

**This leaflet will explain:**

- The role of the Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)
- What to expect when you attend an appointment
- How to contact the SLT
- Ongoing SLT care

## The role of the Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)

Speech and Language Therapists are Allied Health Professionals who are trained to assess, treat and advise on difficulties with swallowing, communication and voice. There may be difficulties for a number of reasons due to where the cancer is, the effects of surgery and/or side effects of radiotherapy or chemotherapy.

Your SLT appointment may take approximately 20-45 minutes and will be held in the floor clinic in the radiotherapy department, or wherever is quiet/appropriate. We will aim to schedule your appointment to be near to your treatment time so you will not need to make an additional journey to the Centre.

We may schedule your appointment to be with the dietitian or another member of the team - if we are discussing similar issues. Please let us know if you have particular views or preferences about how your appointments should be arranged.

The therapist works closely with other health professionals and will refer you on, if needed. They will discuss this with you, if required. The SLT is a member of the Cancer Rehabilitation and Support Team (CReST) in Clatterbridge. This means that we aim to work with you as a team so that we can offer as much support as you need, when you need it.

## What to expect when you attend an appointment

The SLT will:

- Meet with you to discuss how you are currently managing and what is important to you
- Outline the role of the SLT in supporting you during, and after, your treatment
- Assess your individual needs, which can include an assessment of your speech and swallowing. You may be asked to eat or drink something, for example, water, yoghurt or cake
- Look at how your jaw, tongue and voice box (larynx) are working and check that you can swallow safely

- Discuss how you are managing with your speech, communication and voice to make sure that we are able to support you with your choices, views and everyday life
- Give you information and advice on the likely side effects of treatment on your speech and swallowing
- Recommend a set of speech and language exercises, if appropriate
- Discuss the texture of your food/drink and any other advice about swallowing to help you eat and drink

## How to contact the SLT

If you are concerned about your speech, communication, voice or swallowing, you can contact us directly, or you can ask any of the Health Care staff to contact us.

**Contact Details:** You can contact the Speech and Language Therapist by telephoning **0151 556 5000** extension **5791**.

## Ongoing care

If needed, the SLT at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre will contact the SLT in your local area to ensure that you have local support. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please do not hesitate to contact us on the number above.

