

Patient Information

Pelvic Floor Service Biofeedback for bowel control problems

Introduction

You have been referred by your Consultant for Biofeedback Therapy at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. This is an individualised nurse-led bowel retraining programme involving support, re-education and exercises.

Biofeedback appointments take between 30 minutes to 1 hour and you will attend the clinic every 2 to 4 weeks for a maximum of 6 sessions. This information leaflet is intended only for patients under the care of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Pelvic Floor Service. Please ask if you need any further information.

Bowel control problems are thought to affect 10 to 15% of the general population. Common causes include childbirth injuries, older age or as a result of medications or medical conditions. We recognise that problems with bowel control are very embarrassing and isolating. People will commonly restrict what they eat and when and where they go. Their bowels impact on every aspect of their lives including their work, social activities and personal relationships.

What does treatment involve?

The Specialist Nurse will explain about normal bowel function, identify the factors affecting your bowels and agree a plan of care with you. You will be asked to undress from the waist down and lie on your left side. After a rectal examination a small tube is inserted into your bottom and is connected to a computer. This provides visual feedback to help you recognise how to strengthen your anal sphincter muscles.

You will exercise and strengthen your anal sphincter muscles and learn techniques that help you to control your bowels more effectively. Simple dietary changes and medication may be used to

improve stool consistency or assist you to evacuate. You may be asked to fill in a bowel diary to check your progress.

No special bowel preparation is required before biofeedback appointments and you will be able to leave the hospital and get on with your usual activities straight after. Treatment will be stopped by mutual agreement if you are not making satisfactory progress.

What happens between appointments?

You will usually be given some pelvic floor exercises to practice between appointments. These are very important for maintaining your progress.

A home biofeedback trainer device may also be provided on loan to help with your muscle strengthening between appointments. You will be shown how to use the device and given further written information.

Medication

Continue as normal on any usual medication during biofeedback.

Benefits, risks and alternatives

Biofeedback is a very safe treatment. It improves bowel function in around 7 out of 10 people often avoiding surgery with minimal interference in your usual lifestyle. Patients are sometimes referred after surgery if appropriate.

Although it does not work for everyone it will not make your bowel function any worse. You may experience minor anal discomfort after treatment however this will resolve within a short time. Any ongoing discomfort or rectal bleeding should be reported to the Specialist Nurse or your GP.

Rectal irrigation may be offered alongside biofeedback or as an alternative bowel management option. It is a long-term option that can be used at home either on a regular basis or intermittently. Warm water is used to flush out your bowels with a prescription irrigation device. The Specialist Nurse will assess your suitability for irrigation and arrange training.

Continence products including pads, plugs, skin care and odour control products and are available from the Community Continence Service. Contact details are provided at the end of the leaflet.

What happens after biofeedback?

Your case will be reviewed by our hospital pelvic floor specialist team. A further outpatient follow up will be arranged to review your progress and discuss any further treatment as appropriate.

Contact details for more information

Pelvic Floor Nurse Specialist

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Telephone: 01743 261083 (24hr answerphone)

Further information is available from;

- **Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

- **Shropshire Community Continence Team**

Shropshire Rehabilitation Centre
Lancaster Road
Shrewsbury
Telephone: 01743 444062

- **Bladder and Bowel Community**

www.bladderandbowel.org.uk
Resources including 'no waiting card' and useful app
Telephone: 01926 357220

- **The Pelvic Floor Society**

A national multi-professional body involved in supporting excellence in clinical practice, education and research, clinical standards, patient information and engagement in the commissioning of pelvic floor services.

Telephone: 020 7973 0307

Website: www.thepelvicfloorsociety.co.uk

- **NHS 111**

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: www.nhs.uk

- **Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites

Website: www.patient.info

- **Self-Help UK**

This is a directory of self-help groups and charities

Website: www.selfhelp.org.uk

- **RADAR National Key Scheme**

Disabled access to locked toilets nationwide

Telephone: 020 7250 8191

Website: www.disabilityrightsuk.org/radar-nks-key

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

Information Produced by: The Pelvic Floor Team.

Date of Publication:

Due for Review on:

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