

Malignant Spinal Cord Compression (MSCC)

Information for patients at risk



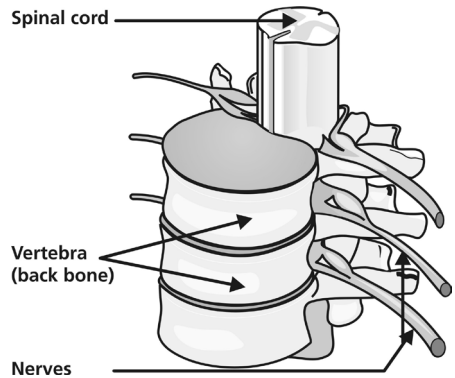
Leeds Cancer
Centre

This leaflet is for patients who may experience a condition called Malignant Spinal Cord Compression (MSCC), at some point in the future.

The following advice explains what symptoms to look out for and who to contact if you think you have developed any of these symptoms.

The Spinal Cord

The spinal cord is the chain of nerves that sits within the back-bone (spine/vertebrae). The nerves for all parts of the body, including the legs, arms, bladder and bowel branch from the spinal cord.



What are the early signs and symptoms of MSCC?

Listed below are some of the most common signs and symptoms of MSCC. **Please note:** if you are suffering with any of the following, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have a cord-compression, but early diagnosis is key to stop further problems.

- Persistent severe pain in the back which you have not experienced before, that is getting worse especially when coughing, sneezing or straining. You may also have some shooting pains down your arms or legs.
- A band of pain around the chest or abdomen.

- Feeling unsteady on your feet (perhaps legs giving way as you stand).
- Finding it difficult to walk.
- Numbness, heaviness or 'pins and needles' in any of your limbs (arms/legs), your fingers, toes or buttocks.
- Problems controlling your bladder; loss of control, or passing small amounts of or no urine at all.
- Constipation or problems controlling your bowels.

This requires urgent medical attention

What to do next

Please contact: Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm:

Your specialist nurse/macmillan nurse/key worker

Contact telephone number:

If you cannot get hold of anyone please follow the advice below.

Out of normal working hours

- Your oncology ward's emergency contact number.
- If you are a Leeds patient - the Oncology blepholder
Tel: 0113 243 3144 - ask for the Oncology Patient Blepholder.
- Out of Hours GP.
- Emergency Department - please take this leaflet with you.

When you contact us, please try to give us the following information:

- Hospital/NHS number
- Diagnosis
- Current medications

Testing for MSCC

- History and clinical examination by a member of the team
- Bloods
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan

If you are not suitable for an MRI scan, we will use a different scan.

Some patients are admitted so please bring an overnight bag and your medications in case you need to stay at the hospital.

If you do have MSCC

- You will be given steroids (Dexamethasone) to take.
- You may be given painkillers if required.
- If you are not in St James's Hospital Leeds already, you will be transferred to the Leeds Radiotherapy Department on Level -2, Bexley Wing, Leeds Cancer Centre (LS9 7TF) for treatment.

What are the treatment options for MSCC?

Usually MSCC will be treated with radiotherapy and/or surgery, or steroids alone.

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy is the use of high energy x-rays with the aim of shrinking (or stopping any further growth) of your cancer.

Urgent radiotherapy treatment is often given to stop any further growth of the tumour which is pushing against your spinal cord. This treatment aims to stop your symptoms getting worse and to help relieve the pain.

Surgery

Less commonly, surgery can be used as well as or instead of Radiotherapy.

Further support

If the information in this leaflet has caused you any anxiety you may want to speak to somebody about this. This could be your Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Key Worker or you can contact any of the support services listed below. The Palliative Care Team, CNS or Key Worker details are for non-urgent advice and support.

The Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre

This centre offers a variety of free health & wellbeing and supportive therapies for patients, their family members and carers. These include hypnotherapy, mindfulness coaching, acupuncture (for hot flushes) and pilates.

Contact: The Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre,
St James's University Hospital Beckett Street, Leeds LS9 7TF
Tel: 0113 206 6498 **Email:** leedsth-tr.Cancersupport@nhs.net

Maggie's Centre

If you or someone you love has cancer you may have lots of questions. Maggie's is a warm, welcoming place where you can meet people who are experiencing similar things to you.

You may also be able to find support groups specific to your needs and get advice and information from their professional staff. You don't need an appointment and all support is free.

Open Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00pm.

Tel: (0113) 457 8364

Address: St James's Hospital (next to the multi storey car park),
Alma Street, Leeds LS9 7BE

Email: leeds@maggiescentres.org

Website: maggiescentres.org

Community Palliative Care Team at St Gemma's Hospice

Tel: 0113 218 5500

Community Palliative Care Team at Wheatfields Hospice

Tel: 0113 278 7249

Macmillan Cancer Support

Freephone **0808 808 0000**, 8am to 8pm seven days a week.
A textphone service for deaf and hard of hearing people is available on: **18001 0808 808 0000**.

Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Live Through This

A cancer support and advocacy charity for the LGBTIQ+ community.

Email: contact@livethroughthis.co.uk

Website: <https://livethroughthis.co.uk>



What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



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