

Paediatric outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy (p-OPAT) service

This leaflet aims to provide you with information about the p-OPAT service. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you and your child.

What is p-OPAT?

Antibiotics are used to fight against infections caused by bacteria. When antibiotics are injected into a vein, it is called intravenous (IV) or parenteral therapy. It has been decided that IV antibiotics are the best course of treatment for your child. IV antibiotics are usually given to children in hospital but they can be given safely in an outpatient clinic or at home. When given in a clinic or at home, this is called OPAT (outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy). If your child is receiving paediatric OPAT (p-OPAT) your local community children's nursing team will give the daily doses, or as the parent/carer, you can be taught to give the antibiotics at home.

How is the antibiotic given?

The antibiotic is given into your child's vein through a small narrow flexible tube called a cannula or IV line. The cannula is inserted into a vein using a needle. The needle is removed and the plastic cannula is left in place and secured by a dressing.

The cannula or IV line chosen for your child's treatment will depend on your child's veins and how long your child needs antibiotics for. You will be given further information about the cannula or IV line used and how to care for it by the p-OPAT nurse. Before discharge you will be given a plan for what to do if there are any issues with the cannula or IV line.

Who decides if my child should receive p-OPAT?

Children being considered for the p-OPAT service will be those who are ready to go home, but who need further IV antibiotic treatment. If the medical/surgical team looking after you think that your child is suitable for the service then they will refer you to the p-OPAT team. A p-OPAT nurse and infectious diseases doctor will then meet with you to assess you and see if your child is eligible. The p-OPAT process will be fully explained to you and you can decide whether it is something that you would like to consider. If you decide to go onto the p-OPAT service then arrangements will be made to make sure you and your child are able to go home safely.

Does my child have to go onto the p-OPAT service?

Your child will not be discharged onto the p-OPAT service if you do not wish them to be. If you choose not to go onto the p-OPAT service, alternative options for your child's treatment plan will be discussed with you.

What are the benefits of the p-OPAT service?

You and your child will be able to be at home in a comfortable and familiar setting rather than staying in the hospital. P-OPAT is not always the right choice for everyone, but feedback from previous p-OPAT parents/carers has shown that they would choose it again rather than a long stay in hospital. It can also allow you and your child to be back with your family and for you to return to work and your child to school (if applicable).

What are the risks?

Your child will receive at least one dose of their antibiotic in hospital to ensure that they do not develop a severe reaction. Allergic reactions can occur with any medicine and you should seek immediate medical attention if your child develops any symptoms while at home such as a rash, facial swelling or difficulty in breathing.

Occasionally the cannula or IV line can become blocked or an infection can develop. If there are any problems then contact the p-OPAT team (see page 3 for contact details) and your child will be assessed, and if necessary readmitted back into hospital and/or have a new cannula placed. Our working hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm – if there are any problems outside these hours, please attend your local emergency department (A&E).

Who will give my child their IV antibiotics?

Some community teams provide nurses that can visit you in your home and administer your child's antibiotics. Some community teams arrange for you and your child to attend your local hospital for doses of antibiotics. However, this may not always be possible depending on the course of treatment that is determined to be best for your child.

In some cases, parents/carers may choose to give their child the antibiotic themselves. If you would like to do this then you will be taught how and assessed in hospital. You will decide with the team which treatment type is best for you and your child. You will receive a supply of your child's IV antibiotics and other supplies needed when your child is discharged from hospital.

How long will my child's treatment last?

Your child may require only a few days or several weeks of p-OPAT, depending on the nature of the infection. Often this may be followed by a further course of oral antibiotics. This will be explained by the infectious diseases doctor looking after your child. During your time on the p-OPAT service you will be looked after by the p-OPAT team at Evelina London. The team will review your child's progress on a weekly basis at the p-OPAT clinic.

When do I need to bring my child to the p-OPAT clinic?

While on the p-OPAT programme you and your child will be required to attend a weekly clinic for review by a p-OPAT specialist nurse and doctor. The p-OPAT team will let you know which day to attend clinic each week. Clinics are held in Ocean outpatient department, ground floor, Evelina London, or on Snow Fox, first floor, St Thomas' Hospital. The p-OPAT nurse will tell you where to attend. Please check in at the Ocean or Snow Fox reception for your appointment.

At the clinic appointment, your child's cannula or IV line will be reviewed and the dressing changed. Blood samples to monitor the therapy are also taken by the p-OPAT nurse. This is to ensure your child is responding to treatment and the cannula or IV line is maintained appropriately. Your child will also receive a dose of antibiotic if attending clinic means that you will miss your community nurse's visit at home. You will also obtain further supplies of your child's antibiotic when you attend the weekly p-OPAT clinic. If there are any issues with attending the weekly appointment you must contact the p-OPAT clinical nurse specialist (see below for contact details).

What should I do if my child is unwell or I am concerned?

Please do not hesitate to contact the p-OPAT team if you have any concerns. The contact numbers for the p-OPAT team are listed below. Complications on p-OPAT are rare but it is important to look after your child's cannula or IV line as directed. Very occasionally children can get problems directly related to the antibiotic they are taking. This can occur whether you are at home or in hospital. Some common things to look out for include the following:

- rash
- diarrhoea
- fever (temperature over 38C), feeling hot/cold
- pain, redness and swelling around the cannula or IV line
- blocked cannula or IV line.

If your child feels unwell while at home with any of the above symptoms please contact us on the numbers below and let us know (our working hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). We will then be able to advise you and treat your child. **Outside these hours, please go to your local emergency department (A&E). In the event of an emergency, please call 999 for an ambulance or go to your local emergency department.**

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about p-OPAT, please contact the clinical nurse specialist on **t:** 07771 678 353, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. You can also contact the p-OPAT nurse by calling the switchboard on **t:** 020 7188 7188, then ask for the bleep desk. Ask for bleep 3053 and wait for a response. This will connect you to the p-OPAT nurse directly.

Outside these hours, please go to your local emergency department (A&E). Please take with you your p-OPAT discharge letter that contains your child's details and current treatment.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

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