



Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT)

Complex Outpatient Antibiotic Therapy (COpAT)

A patient's guide



Supply of antibiotics

You will be given 1-2 weeks supply on discharge. Then, if you are having:

a) **OPAT at home using self-administration or district nurses:**

We will send you weekly antibiotic supply, usually on a Wednesday

b) **OPAT in AEC:**

Your antibiotics will be sent directly to AEC on a weekly basis.

c) **COpAT at home:**

Your antibiotics will be prescribed and dispensed on a weekly/twice-weekly basis, for collection at the hospital pharmacy.

Your dose, duration and supply of antibiotics will be reviewed once a week, every week by the infection team in a meeting.

What we expect from you

While on the OPAT/COpAT programme you may will need to have weekly blood tests (at home or in AEC) and if required, a review by a specialist doctor, pharmacist, or nurse from the infection team. You may also receive your dose of antibiotic for that day, in AEC if you attend.

If you miss 3 tests or appointments in a row, we will unfortunately have to discharge you from our service

What happens if I feel unwell or have a problem/concern?

Please do not hesitate to contact the OPAT/COpAT team if you have any concerns. Sometimes, patients can get problems directly related to the antibiotic they are taking. Some common things to look out for include the following:

- rash
- diarrhoea
- fever, feeling hot/cold, high temperature
- pain, redness and swelling around IV line
- blocked IV line

If you feel unwell while at home with any of the above symptoms, please contact us (using details below). Occasionally the IV line can become blocked, or an infection can develop, therefore it is important to look after your IV line as directed.

In an emergency, please call 999 for an ambulance or go to your nearest emergency department (A&E).

Contact details

- **E: OPAT/COpAT Team**
whh-tr.opat@nhs.net
- **T: Ambulatory Care (AEC)**
02072883552 and ask for OPAT.

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net. **If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.**

OPAT/COpAT Service

This leaflet provides you with information about the Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT) and Complex Outpatient Antibiotic Therapy (COpAT) service. If you have any further questions, please speak to a pharmacist, doctor or nurse at Whittington.

What is OPAT/COpAT?

Antibiotics are used to fight against infections caused by bacteria. When antibiotics are injected, it is called intravenous (IV) or parenteral therapy. IV antibiotics can be given in clinic or at home, this is known as OPAT. When certain antibiotics are given orally (by mouth) at home, we call this COpAT.

Whilst under the OPAT/COpAT service, your case will be discussed in a weekly meeting where an infection doctor, pharmacist and nurse will review your progress.

OPAT

Depending on your needs, you will either receive your treatment in your home by a nurse, or you will attend Ambulatory Emergency Care (AEC) for your treatment. In some cases we may be able to train you to give your own medications.

To receive your IV antibiotics, you will have to have a PICC line put in. This is like a cannula that goes in your upper arm and requires weekly dressing changes in AEC. This stays in place for the duration of your IV antibiotic and is removed at the end of your treatment.

COpAT

If you are prescribed long-term (> 2 weeks) of certain types of oral antibiotics at home, you will regular blood tests for monitoring. These antibiotics include:

Co-amoxiclav + Amoxicillin dual therapy | Co-trimoxazole | Fluconazole | Itraconazole | Linezolid and others

Who is the main clinician looking after me?

The OPAT/COpAT team is a consult service. This means we advise your referring doctors or team on treatment and monitor your infection only.

You should have a review booked in with your medical/surgical team or GP.

Who decides if I need OPAT/COpAT?

If you are well enough to go home, but still need IV antibiotics or complex oral antibiotics, your medical or surgical team will refer you to the OPAT service.

The process, including specific monitoring arrangements, will be fully explained to you so you can decide whether it is something that you would like to consider. If you decide to go onto the service, arrangements will be made to make sure you are able to go home safely. It is entirely your choice to accept or decline this service.

What are the benefits of the OPAT/COpAT service to me?

You will be able to be at home in a comfortable and familiar setting rather than staying in the hospital. Feedback from patients has shown that they would choose OPAT/COpAT rather than a prolonged hospital stay. It allows you to maintain your independence, be back with your family and friends or even return to work

What are the risks to me?

All treatments have risks associated with them. Risks specific to OPAT include allergic reactions, side effects to antibiotics and PICC line issues. You will receive at least one dose of your antibiotic in hospital to ensure that you do not develop a reaction. Allergic reactions can occur with any medicine and therefore you should seek immediate medical attention if you develop any symptoms whilst at home such as a rash, facial swelling or difficulty in breathing.

All antibiotics can have side-effects, however this does not mean that all patients will develop side-effects. Please refer to the back of this leaflet for detailed information on what signs and symptoms to look out for and how to get in touch with the OPAT/COpAT team.