

What should I do?

If you have any of the symptoms described in this leaflet we advise that you contact your GP or local A&E department within 24 hours and show them this leaflet.

If your doctor is concerned that you might have MSCC they will contact the hospital so that your symptoms can be investigated.

Your Oncologist is:

Further information can be found on the macmillan website;
www.macmillan.org.uk


Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428331 www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.

Malignant Spinal Cord Compression

This leaflet will help you to be aware of the symptoms of a rare but potentially serious condition called malignant spinal cord compression (MSCC)



What is malignant spinal cord compression?

Many types of cancer can spread, or sit very close to the bones of the spine. MSCC occurs when cancer cells growing in or near to the spine pressing on the spinal cord and nerves. The symptoms are caused by the increasing pressure (compression) on the spinal cord and nerves, which can affect their function. It is more commonly seen in people with cancers of the breast, lung or prostate and people who have lymphoma or myeloma.

In this situation, investigations and treatment need to be started as soon as possible and usually includes steroid and radiotherapy or occasionally surgery

Remember MSCC only occurs in a small number of people.

What should I look out for?

Back pain is a very common problem and can be caused by many things. However the following type of back pain may need further investigation

- Back pain anywhere from your neck downwards, which is **different** from your usual pain.
- Unexplained back pain which may be mild to begin with but last for more than one or two weeks.

- Pain which feels like a 'band' around the chest or abdomen and may also radiate into the buttocks or legs.
- Back pain made worse by movement, coughing, sneezing or straining.
- Back pain which is worse at night and stops you from sleeping.

Other symptoms

- Numbness or 'pins and needles' in toes or finger or over the buttocks.
- Feeling unsteady on your feet, having difficulty with walking or your legs giving way.
- Problems passing urine (this may include difficulty controlling your bladder, passing very little urine or passing none at all)
- New problems with constipation or problems controlling your bowels.

These symptoms can also be caused by a number of other conditions. However it is very important to let your doctor know if you have any of these symptoms so that they can be investigated. The earlier MSCC is diagnosed the better the chances of the treatment being effective.