

Upper aerodigestive tract cancer overview

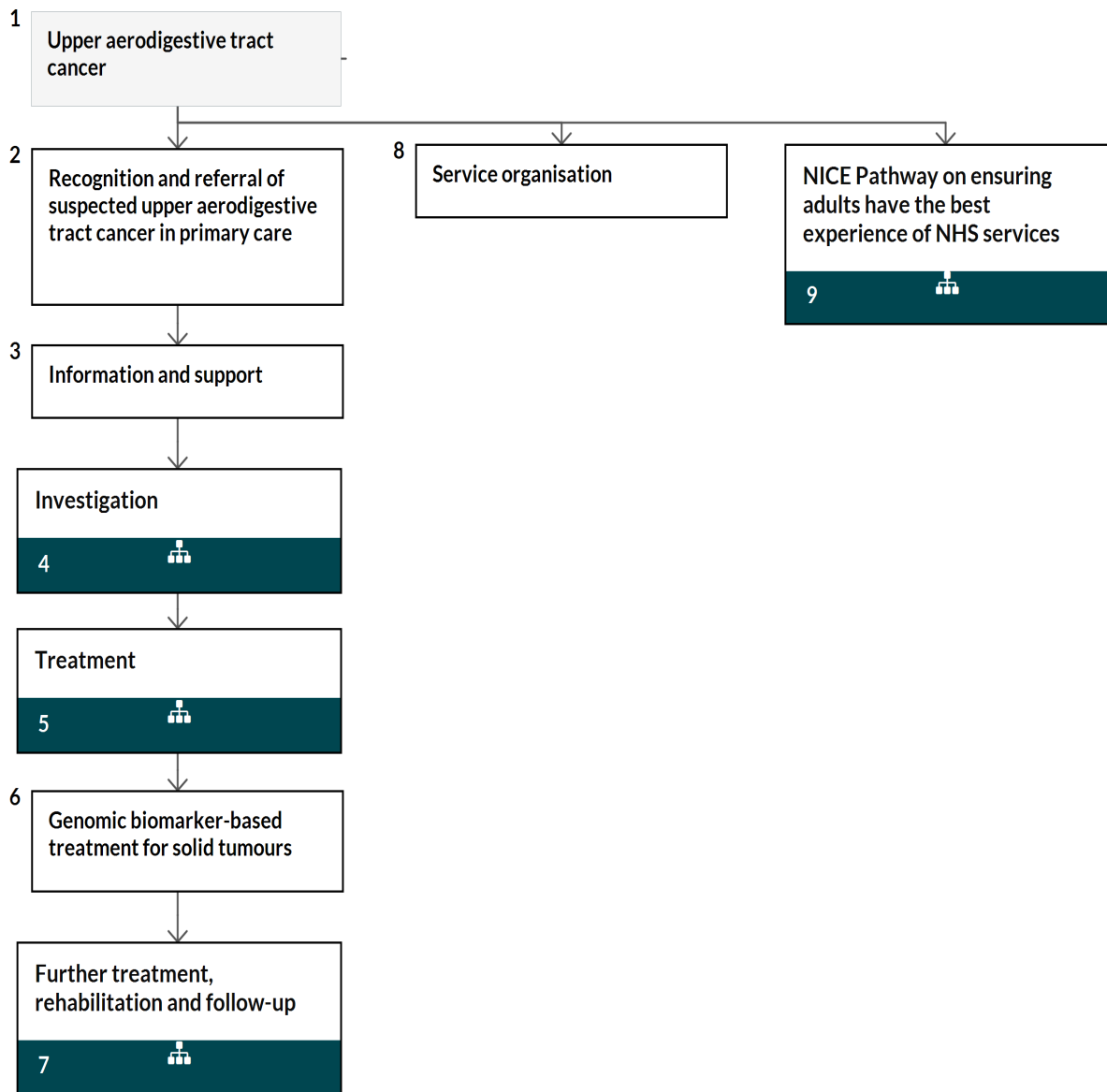
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/upper-aerodigestive-tract-cancer>

NICE Pathway last updated: 25 November 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Upper aerodigestive tract cancer

No additional information

2 Recognition and referral of suspected upper aerodigestive tract cancer in primary care

See [the NICE Pathway on suspected cancer: recognition and referral](#) for information on:

- when to suspect head and neck cancers in primary care
- referral for further investigation or assessment.

3 Information and support

For people with cancer of the upper aerodigestive tract and their carers:

- provide consistent information and support at diagnosis
- review their needs throughout the care pathway including at the end of treatment
- tailor information and support to the person's needs (including the benefits and side effects of treatment, psychosocial and long-term functional issues).

Give people contact details for their allocated key worker, in line with the [NICE guideline on improving outcomes in head and neck cancer](#) and recommendations of the [National Peer Review Programme](#).

Give people details of peer support services that can help them throughout their care pathway.

Offer information about HPV to people with HPV-related cancer of the upper aerodigestive tract.

Smoking cessation

Inform patients and carers at the point of diagnosis about how continuing to smoke adversely affects outcomes such as:

- treatment-related side effects
- risk of recurrence
- risk of second primary cancers.

Offer help to people to stop smoking, in line with [the NICE Pathway on smoking](#).

4 Investigation

See [Upper aerodigestive tract cancer / Investigation of upper aerodigestive tract cancer](#)

5 Treatment

See [Upper aerodigestive tract cancer / Treatment of upper aerodigestive tract cancer](#)

6 Genomic biomarker-based treatment for solid tumours

The point at which to use genomic biomarker-based therapy in solid tumour treatment pathways is uncertain. See [the NICE Pathway on genomic biomarker-based treatment for solid tumours](#) for guidance on specific treatments.

7 Further treatment, rehabilitation and follow-up

See [Upper aerodigestive tract cancer / Further treatment, rehabilitation and follow-up of upper aerodigestive tract cancer](#)

8 Service organisation

NICE has produced [guidelines on improving outcomes in head and neck cancers](#) and [improving supportive and palliative care for adults with cancer](#).

See also what NICE says on [opioids for pain relief in palliative care](#) and [end of life care for people with life-limiting conditions](#).

9 NICE Pathway on ensuring adults have the best experience of NHS services

See [Patient experience in adult NHS services](#)

Glossary

HPV

human papillomavirus

Sources

Cancer of the upper aerodigestive tract: assessment and management in people aged 16 and over (2016 updated 2018) NICE guideline NG36

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.