



Cliff Pettifor, cancer survivor

Know 4 sure: How pharmacy teams can help with the cancer symptoms campaign

naedi.org/beclearoncancer/know4sure

The NHS is piloting a campaign in your area to raise awareness of four key signs of cancer. We need your support.

What is Be Clear on Cancer?

Be Clear on Cancer aims to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of symptoms and encouraging people to see their GP earlier. The Department of Health reviews the latest evidence and engages with experts to develop key messages for the campaigns, testing them locally and regionally, with a view to then rolling them out nationally.

What is different about this campaign?

Following several tumour-specific cancer awareness campaigns, Be Clear on Cancer has become a well-recognised brand. Therefore it is timely to pilot a more general cancer symptoms approach that will work alongside them. 'Know 4 sure' is the headline for this new Be Clear on Cancer campaign – it will be used in all the adverts and materials.

Why run this cancer symptoms campaign?

Awareness of signs and symptoms of cancer is low and we know that people can delay going to see their GP for a number of reasons.

But with more than 200 types of cancer, the Department of Health can't continue to produce individual campaigns. So, this campaign will focus on four key symptoms that are indicators for a number of cancers, including less common ones.

What is the campaign's key message?

Know 4 sure

When it comes to cancer, there are 4 key signs to look out for:

1. Unexplained blood that doesn't come from an obvious injury
2. An unexplained lump
3. Unexplained weight loss, which feels significant to you
4. Any type of unexplained pain that doesn't go away

Chances are it's nothing serious, but finding it early makes it more treatable. So if you notice any of these signs, tell your doctor.

Why focus on these four signs of cancer?

Working with a panel of experts and clinicians, including GPs, the Department of Health selected these symptoms based on clinical predictors of cancer and the findings of research into the most commonly reported symptoms by cancer patients. The campaign message was then tested with a sample of GPs, as well as the target audience. The campaign leaflet also includes other possible cancer symptoms.

Who is the campaign aimed at?

Men and women aged 50 and over, and their key influencers, such as friends and family.

What's happening in your local area and when?

A range of activities will be taking place from 14 January to mid-March 2013 across the pilot areas. All will include advertising, for example in local press, and some may include community-based work, such as local events.

Why does this campaign need your support?

You have an important role to play – pharmacies are often the first port of call for those experiencing symptoms.

You may be aware of people frequently buying over the counter (OTC) medicines to treat symptoms or they may ask your advice. Many people like the informal environment of the pharmacy and may find it easier to discuss their symptoms or worries in this setting. Ensure they are able to have any sensitive conversations in private or in a way that others will not be able to overhear. If someone has persistent, new or unexplained symptoms, they could be an indicator of a number of different cancers. This is an ideal opportunity to suggest a visit to their GP.

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More about cancer

- **There are more than 200 types of cancer, each with different causes, symptoms and treatments**
- **More than 236,000 people aged 50 and over are diagnosed with cancer in England each year – that's around 650 people every day**
- **It is estimated that up to 10,000 cancer deaths each year could be avoided through earlier diagnosis and access to optimal treatment**

'Earlier diagnosis of cancer is vital to improve survival rates and, as pharmacy teams, we're well placed to support patients and the public to get the treatment they need as soon as possible by signposting them to their GP. With this campaign covering four key signs, our role in providing reassurance, keeping a look out for those most at risk and encouraging them to get symptoms checked out is all the more important.'

Bruce Pimlott, MRPharmS

Who is most at risk of cancer?

Cancer affects both men and women, and is more common in older age – almost nine in ten cancers in England are diagnosed in people aged 50 and over. There are other risk factors, but they vary across different cancers.

'I had several bouts of illness, feeling sick with an ache across my stomach. Following tests, they found a growth in my pancreas. It is almost four years since my operation and all in all, life is great.'

Cliff Pettifor, aged 71, cancer survivor and supporter of Pancreatic Cancer UK

Opening cancer conversations with customers can be difficult. Do you have any tips?

A Cancer Research UK nurse, who specialises in communicating about cancer, advises: 'It is important for pharmacists and their teams to feel confident and to try and make cancer a normal part of conversation. Practise and find phrases that you are comfortable with. For example if you wanted to mention cancer as part of a medicine-use review, talking about it in the same breath as heart disease, stroke and diabetes may make it easier. If you are worried about someone who has repeatedly bought OTC medicines for a suspected cancer symptom, you could ask: "What does the doctor say about that?" or "Do you think it might be a good idea to discuss your symptoms with your GP?"'

Pharmacy staff who feel uncomfortable talking about cancer should seek the advice of a pharmacist.

What support is available for pharmacy teams?

There are several resources to support pharmacy teams, including interactive online learning modules about several different cancer types at the British Oncology Pharmacy Association's (BOPA) learning centre and a Cancer Awareness Toolkit for frontline staff. If you need any further support, try contacting your local Cancer Network.

How are GPs and hospitals preparing for the campaign?

Your Cancer Network has learned from the experiences of the previous Be Clear on Cancer campaigns and is working closely with local GPs and hospitals to prepare for and monitor any increases in demand for diagnostic tests and referrals. There are also additional briefing sheets for GPs and practice teams.

Three things you can do to help

1 Make it part of your day. During your regular consultations, such as medicine-use reviews, over the counter sales or in conversations with members of the public, be mindful that the people you are talking to may have seen the campaign. It may prompt people who have previously ignored their symptoms to do something – they may come to your pharmacy looking for OTC medicines or advice.

2 Give permission. Our target audience can delay going to see their GP and are often looking for reassurance to make an appointment. Where relevant, encourage people to visit their GP. If you feel comfortable, tell the customer to mention that their pharmacist sent them. It may be the push they need to get themselves checked out.

3 Promote the campaign. Put up posters in your pharmacy and have some leaflets readily available. You can order these free of charge from the Department of Health via www.orderline.dh.gov.uk or by ringing 0300 123 1002. Encourage colleagues to talk about the campaign and chat to your friends, family and the public about Be Clear on Cancer. It is often face-to-face discussion that changes behaviour.

Find out more about the 'Know 4 sure' campaign

- **Information and resources for pharmacy teams are available at:** www.naedi.org/beclearoncancer/know4sure
- **From 14 January, the public-facing website is** www.nhs.uk/know4sure