

Patient information for urgent referrals

This information sheet explains why your GP or dentist has referred you to hospital, what it means and what you need to do

Why have I been referred urgently to hospital?

You've been referred urgently because your GP or dentist feels your symptoms need further investigation and has referred you to a specialist. There are many common conditions that these symptoms could be linked to, including the possibility of cancer.

Because this referral is urgent, it means that you will be offered an appointment at hospital within two weeks.

Does this mean I have cancer?

Having an urgent referral does not necessarily mean you have cancer. Most people who have an urgent referral don't have cancer. However, you have been referred because you need to see a specialist or have some investigations quickly to help find out what is wrong with you.

In the event that cancer is diagnosed, then ensuring that the diagnosis is made early means treatment is likely to be more effective and this is why it is important that you are seen within 2 weeks of the referral being made.

What do I need to do?

- Make sure your GP or dentist has your correct address and telephone number including a mobile number if you have one.
- Ensure you are available within the next two weeks for an appointment. If you are unable to attend an appointment within the next two weeks, please tell your GP or dentist.
- If you require a translator, please let the hospital know in advance of your appointment.
- Once you have agreed your urgent appointment, it is important that you attend it, so that your care is not delayed.
- If you do not attend your hospital appointment on two occasions, you will be referred back to your GP or dentist. This is so someone else can have the appointment.

What will happen next?

The hospital will send you an appointment either by letter within a few days or by telephone. If you have not heard anything within a week of seeing your GP or dentist please let them know you haven't received an appointment yet.

Once you have been given your appointment it is very important that you attend. Please let the hospital know immediately if you are unable to keep your appointment. You will then need to arrange an alternative appointment.

What will happen at the hospital?

When you have your hospital appointment you will usually see a specialist who will give you some more information about what will happen next. You may also require some tests which will help both the specialist and your GP or dentist understand what is causing your symptoms. You will be told in advance if you need to have any tests during your appointment, so please ensure you follow any instructions given to you in advance.

You are welcome to bring a friend or family member with you, as it may be helpful if you have concerns about understanding what the medical team will discuss with you.

Any questions?

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your referral to hospital, please call the GP surgery or dentist to speak to the person who referred you.