

Urgent Suspected Cancer Referral

Information for patients during the
COVID-19 pandemic



Why have I been referred urgently to the hospital?

Your General Practitioner (GP) General Dental Practitioner (GDP) or Optometrist feels that you have symptoms that require investigation by a hospital specialist. This is so that your illness can be diagnosed and treated quickly and effectively.

The majority of people referred in this way do not have cancer. The signs and symptoms you have may be caused by a number of common conditions but could include cancer so you need to see a specialist as soon as possible.

What does it mean to be urgently referred?

An urgent two-week referral usually means that you will be offered an appointment with a hospital specialist within 2 weeks of your GP/Dentist/Optometrist making the referral.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you are likely to be offered a telephone appointment as your first contact with the hospital. The timescales for your first contact may vary during this time.

Make sure that your GP (or dentist) has your correct address, telephone number (including your mobile number) and an email address if you have one.

Please tell your GP practice if you are unable to manage a telephone call and what help you may need for us to get in touch with you.

If you have not been contacted by the hospital within **two weeks** of seeing or speaking with your GP and being given this leaflet, please telephone the hospital directly on [0300 303 8360](tel:03003038360) or email bsuh.outpatients.bookingcentre@nhs.net



About your referral:

We want to avoid any unnecessary visits to the hospital in order to help combat the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). It is likely that your first contact will be by telephone by the hospital team, who will advise and discuss with you the next steps about your healthcare. This will cover information about any tests that the hospital

team would like you to undergo immediately. Depending on this consultation, some investigations may be planned for an alternative or later date, when there is less risk of you getting COVID-19

Please note: In some cases, where this is feasible, arrangements for a face to face 'video' consultation with the specialist clinician may also be possible.

What if I become unwell?

If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 including a fever and/or new persistent cough whilst awaiting your appointment, or if you need to self-isolate because a family member is unwell, please contact the hospital on the above number, to let them know.

Do not go to the hospital or your appointment without speaking to them first.

Your safety and the safety of NHS staff is very important.

What if I cancel or cannot attend my appointment?

Your GP/Dentist/Optometrlist believes that your symptoms need to be investigated as soon as possible, so it is important that you are flexible when arranging this appointment. You should make every effort to be available for the first appointment you are given. However, if you cannot make the appointment you are given, please contact the hospital as soon as possible (see contact details above), so an alternative can be arranged.

If you cancel an arranged appointment without notice, or do not attend your appointment, the hospital will do their best to ensure you are seen as soon as possible.

How do I get to hospital?

If you cannot drive or arrange your own transport, or public transport is limited, you may be able to use the patient ambulance transport service. Please speak to the receptionist at your GP practice as soon as possible if this is something you require.

If you need to be supported to get to your appointment, a maximum of one person can attend with you.





Your Appointment

What will happen at my appointment?

In order to help your specialist understand the cause of your symptoms, you may be required to undergo some tests.

Depending on the nature of your symptoms these tests may be required at different stages. The tests may be needed either:

- before you see your specialist
- during your first appointment with the specialist,
- or the specialist may refer you for these tests following your first appointment.

Details on what will happen at your first appointment and any tests you might need will usually be sent with your appointment confirmation. The hospital will send you the relevant information after your appointment has been booked. If you do not receive this information or have any further questions, please contact the GP/Dentist/Optomtrist who referred you to the hospital.

You may find it useful to write down any questions you want to ask during your appointment and have them with you, to refer to. The specialist team will give you a lot of information and many people find it useful to take a friend or relative along with them. All hospitals are being asked to protect patients and staff by reducing the number of visitors. If you are unable or prefer not to attend alone, please remember only one person should accompany you.

For more information about your urgent suspected cancer referral, visit Cancer Research UK: Your urgent referral explained <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/>

Support for anyone affected by cancer or awaiting investigations can also be accessed on the Macmillan website www.macmillan.org.uk

The Macmillan Support Line is currently available 7 days a week, 9am – 5pm
[0808 808 00 00](tel:0808808000)

Free cancer information is also available through the Macmillan website
<https://be.macmillan.org.uk>

Local Support Resources:

If you need digital support to keep in touch with friends and family;
<https://digitalbrightonandhove.org.uk/covid-19-network-response/>

