

Why have I been referred urgently to the hospital?

The urgent 2 week wait referral system

- **What you can expect**
- **What you need to do**

This information sheet is to help you understand your referral to hospital. It is important to remember that being given an urgent referral to a specialist does not necessarily mean that you have cancer.

Why have I been referred to hospital?

Your General Practitioner (GP) or Dentist has asked for you to have an urgent hospital appointment within two weeks. Depending on your symptoms this appointment may be to attend an outpatient clinic, a diagnostic test or a combination of the two. The “two week” appointment system was introduced so that a specialist would see any patient with symptoms that might indicate cancer as quickly as possible.

Does this mean I have cancer?

No it doesn't. The majority of patients referred under the “two week” appointment system do not have cancer but a simple, or benign, condition.

So why has my GP referred me?

GPs diagnose and treat many illnesses themselves; however, they occasionally need to arrange for you to see a specialist hospital doctor. This could be for a number of reasons, such as:

- Your symptoms need further investigation
- The treatment already prescribed has not been effective
- Investigations your GP arranged have shown some abnormal results
- To be sure it is not a serious disease

There are national guidelines for your GP to use to make a decision about whether to refer you for an appointment within two weeks.

What do I need to do now?

- Make sure that your GP has your correct address and telephone number, including mobile number, if possible
- The hospital will try to contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment so the correct contact telephone number is very important. If they are not able to make telephone contact, an appointment letter will be sent in the post.
- Contact your GP surgery if you have not been contacted by the hospital within one week of the appointment with your GP
- Let the hospital know immediately if you are unable to attend your appointment so that the appointment can be offered to someone else. It is important that you arrange an alternative date and time when cancelling this appointment.
- At the end of your first appointment the hospital staff will give you more information about what will happen next.
- Please feel free to bring someone with you to this appointment, you may find this helpful. Do not feel that you have to be alone.

Two week referral patient information leaflet adapted from North East London Cancer Network (NELCN) by Sussex Cancer Network (SCN)

Surrey West Sussex and Hampshire Cancer Network (SWSHCN) April 2008

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Further Information

You can get more information about the 'two week' appointment system and other information from these websites:

- Department of Health (publications): www.dh.gov.uk
- NHS Direct: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- NICE (Clinical Guidelines, Referral for Suspected Cancer): www.nice.org.uk
- Surrey, West Sussex and Hampshire Cancer Network: www.swshcn.nhs.uk
- Free phone patient help lines:

Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 2020
Macmillan Youth Line	0808 808 0800
Cancer Backup Helpline	0808 800 1234
Cancer Research UK	0808 800 4040

Contact details

Royal Surrey County Hospital
Egerton Road
Guildford
GU2 7XX
Tel: 01483 571122

Ashford Hospital
London Road
Ashford
Middlesex TW15 3AA
Tel: 01784 884488

East Surrey Hospital
Canada Avenue
Redhill
RH1 5RH
Tel: 01737 768511

St Peter's Hospital
Guildford Road
Chertsey
KT16 0PZ
Tel: 01932 872000

Frimley Park Hospital
Portsmouth Road
Frimley
GU16 7UJ
Tel: 01276 604604

Hampshire Primary Care Trust
Tel: 023 8064 4789

Surrey Primary Care Trust
Tel: 01372 227300

West Sussex Primary Care Trust
Tel: 01903 708400