YOUR URGENT REFERRAL EXPLAINED

WHAT IS AN URGENT REFERRAL?

Your GP has arranged for you to see a hospital doctor (specialist) urgently. This is to investigate your symptoms further. You may have some tests to find out what is wrong and if it could be cancer.

HOW QUICKLY WILL I BE SEEN?

An urgent referral will be processed as quickly as possible and an appointment arranged with you by phone or post. Some areas have targets around how quickly you will be seen (see box on the right).

9 OUT OF 10 PEOPLE

REFERRED IN THIS WAY ARE NOT DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER

TIME FRAME

In England, an urgent referral means that you should see a specialist within 2 weeks. This 2 week time limit does not exist in Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, the 2 week wait ONLY applies if you are referred for suspected breast cancer.

1. RECEIVING AN URGENT REFERRAL

- Your GP might make the appointment, or the hospital might contact you directly.
- **It's very important that you attend your appointment.** If you can't make it, call the hospital as soon as you can to rearrange.
- If your symptoms get worse, tell your GP.

Handy Hints

- Check your GP has your current contact details.
- If you don't get your appointment details within a week, call your GP surgery and tell them it's an urgent referral.

2. GOING TO YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Your appointment letter will include: the time, where to go, who you're seeing and anything you need to do to prepare.
- You may be sent straight for tests, or you might see a specialist first.
- You may need to describe your symptoms again. It could help to write things down in advance.

Handy Hints

- Think about arranging transport, time off work or childcare for the day of your appointment.
- Make sure you know where you're going.
- Try to bring a family member or friend with you.
- Allow extra time in case it takes longer than you expect.
- Make sure your mobile phone is charged.

3. HAVING TESTS

- The appointment letter will include details of any tests you will have and any preparations you need to make.
- You may need to have more than one test.
- Call the number on your letter if you have any questions.

Handy Hints

- Ask how long it will take to get your results and make a note of it.
- The person testing you will not usually be able to tell you your results. You may have to wait to speak to your specialist.

You can find information about different types of test at www.cruk.org/urgentreferrals

4. GETTING RESULTS

- Your specialist or GP will usually tell you your results.
- Sometimes you may need to have further tests.
- The time it takes to receive your results varies – you may have to wait several weeks.

Handy Hints

- If you have another appointment, try to bring a family member or friend with you.
- Bring a pen and paper to make notes.
- Call the hospital if you have been waiting for your results for longer than expected.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.

TURN OVER...

CANCER RESEARCH UK

WHAT QUESTIONS COULD I ASK?

Sometimes it's difficult to know what to ask your specialist.

Here are a few ideas that might make it easier:

- If my symptoms get worse, who should I contact?
- Should I make any changes to the medicines I'm taking?
- What tests will I need to have?
- How long will the tests take?
- What will the tests feel like?
- Do the tests have any after effects?
- How long will it take to get my test results?
- Who will give me the test results?
- If I have questions after the appointment, who should I ask?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If you are diagnosed with cancer you will be given lots of information by the hospital. You can also call a Cancer Research UK nurse for information and support on freephone 0808 800 4040.

If you aren't diagnosed with cancer, it's still important that you pay attention to your body. Tell your GP if you notice any unusual and persistent changes.

A health scare makes some people think about improving their general health, for example by keeping a healthy weight or stopping smoking. These things reduce the risk of cancer. If you'd like to know more go to www.cruk.org/health.

YOUR USEFUL INFORMATION

When you know your appointment times and contact details, you can record them here to help you remember.

LET US HELP YOU FIND THE ANSWERS

Find information about urgent referrals cruk.org/urgentreferrals
Ask our specialist nurses 0808 800 4040*
Share your experiences cancerchat.org.uk

*Phone lines open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday

Health & care information you can trust

About Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK pioneers life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. From our volunteers and supporters to our scientists, doctors and nurses, we're all here to save more lives and prevent, control and cure all cancers. If you would like to support our work, please call 0800 123 1861 or visit our website www.cruk.org

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