Surrey and Sussex Cancer Alliance

Patient information for urgent suspected cancer referrals

This information sheet explains why you have been referred to hospital, what it means and what you need to do.

It is available in other languages and Easyread. Ask your GP practice for a print version or download here: https://surreyandsussexcanceralliance.nhs.uk/patients-and-public/patient-information-urgent-cancer-referrals

Why have I been referred urgently to hospital?

You've been referred urgently because your health practitioner feels you might be at risk of cancer and your symptoms need further investigation. You can expect to be seen quickly to find out what is wrong with you.

Does this mean I have cancer?

There are many conditions that your symptoms could be linked to, including the possibility of cancer. Most people who have an urgent referral don't have cancer.

Attending your appointment

If 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 urgently. You should be given a diagnosis within four weeks.

Please make every effort to attend the first appointment you are given, which may be via telephone. However, if you cannot make the appointment or test you are given, please contact the hospital as soon as possible, so an alternative can be arranged.

What does your GP practice need to know?

- Make sure your practice has your correct address and telephone number including a mobile number if you have one as the hospital may contact you via telephone. Please tell your GP practice if you are unable to manage a telephone call.
- If you are unable to attend appointments within the next four weeks, please tell your GP practice.
- If you require a translator, please let your GP practice know and they can inform the hospital.

What will happen next?

You will be contacted to discuss the next steps. Please make sure your contact details are up to date.

If you require any tests, you may be sent information with more details.

How do I get to an appointment/test?

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. When you are contacted about your hospital appointment, please let the hospital booking team know.

What to do at an appointment/test?

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 hospital booking team will be able to tell you if you can bring a friend or family member to the appointment.

What to do if you haven't heard within two weeks?

You will be informed at the time of referral what to do if you haven't heard within two weeks, but if you are unsure about who to contact please discuss with your GP practice.

Useful links for further information

- Cancer Research UK – your urgent suspected cancer referral explained
- www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support

Contact details

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