

Why have I been referred urgently to the hospital?

A leaflet explaining the urgent two week referral system

Why have I been referred to hospital urgently?

Your General Practitioner has asked for you to be seen by a hospital specialist **within two weeks**. The “two week wait” appointment system was introduced so that patients with symptoms that could indicate cancer would be seen by a specialist as quickly as possible. Attending this appointment within the two week timeframe is very important because an early diagnosis and earlier access to treatment has been shown to improve outcomes.

Does this mean I have cancer?

No it does not. The majority of patients referred under the “two week wait” appointment system do not have cancer, but another condition requiring diagnosis and treatment; most of these are benign.

A **small proportion** of patients referred by this route will have cancer, but allowing GPs quick access for their patients to a specialist hopefully will mean that it has been detected early.

Why has my GP referred me?

GPs diagnose and treat the majority of illnesses themselves. Occasionally, they need to arrange for you to see a specialist at the hospital. This could be for a number of reasons, but broadly speaking it will be because:

- The treatment already prescribed has not been effective
- Your symptoms have not gone away and need further investigation to find out the cause
- Investigations have shown some abnormal results that need further investigation

What symptoms might need an urgent referral?

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

Will I need any tests?

You may require specialised tests; the specialist may arrange these before you are seen at the hospital or may do them during or after your first appointment at the hospital depending on what is best for you. These tests will help the specialist to understand what is causing your symptoms .

What do I need to do now?

Make sure that your **GP has your correct address and telephone number, including mobile number if possible**. If not, then go straight to the reception and provide the correct details, explaining why it is important

- The hospital will contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment, so the correct contact telephone number is very important. If you **have not been contacted** by the hospital **within a week** of seeing your GP, then contact your GP practice
- Once you have agreed an appointment date and time, ensure that you follow instructions and attend on the date agreed
- At your first appointment, you will be given more information about what will happen next
- You can bring someone with you to this appointment as you may find it helpful
- You might want to write down some questions to ask at the appointment and also write down the answers you are given
- It is in your best interests to attend your appointment. If there are exceptional circumstances that prevent you from attending, then let the hospital know immediately so that the appointment can be offered to someone else and arrange another appointment

It is important to attend your hospital appointment because if you do have cancer then early diagnosis and early access to treatment is shown to improve outcomes.

Remember that being referred in this way does not necessarily mean that you have cancer

You can get more information about the “two week” appointment system and other information about cancer from the following websites:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer/pages/introduction.aspx>

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/Cancerinformation.aspx>

Airedale 
NHS Foundation Trust

Information leaflet to be given to patients referred with a suspicion of a Lung Cancer via fast track (2 week) referral

The aim of this information sheet is to help you understand why your GP has referred you urgently to a Respiratory Specialist. This information supports the discussion that you will have already had with your GP.

Why have I been referred on the two week GP referral pathway?

Early diagnosis of a disease may mean more effective treatment and better outcomes. For this reason where there is a possibility that symptoms could indicate a cancer people are referred to see

a specialist on what is called a "two week pathway". **Even though you are being referred to a specialist this does not necessarily mean you have cancer.**

The reasons I might need a two week wait appointment

- A recent chest x-ray that shows changes which need further investigation
- Swelling of the face or neck
- A cough that doesn't go away or a long standing cough that's got worse
- Unexplained breathlessness
- Coughing up blood
- Chest, shoulder or back pains
- Hoarse voice
- Unexplained loss of weight or appetite
- Unexplained tiredness or lack of energy
- Recurrent chest infections

What should I do if I am unable to attend an appointment in the next two weeks?

This is an important referral. Let your GP know immediately (or the hospital when they contact you) if you are unable to attend a hospital appointment within the next two weeks.

What do I need to do now?

- Make sure that your GP has your correct address and telephone number details including your mobile phone number
- Do your best to keep the offered appointment, If you cannot attend let the hospital
- If you have any concerns or questions discuss them with your GP

What might happen next?

You may be telephoned by the hospital to arrange further tests before your first clinic appointment, such as a blood test and/or a CT (computerised tomography) scan of your chest and abdomen. This gives the respiratory team more detailed information before you are seen in clinic.

Depending on what your CT scan shows:

- We may see you in clinic to discuss your symptoms and the findings on the scan.
- If the CT scan is normal you may be telephoned and not need to be seen in clinic. If this happens you and your GP will also be sent a letter to confirm the CT scan results.
- If the CT scan shows changes but not a cancer you may be telephoned and booked into an urgent respiratory clinic to be seen within four weeks. If this happens you and your GP will also be sent a letter to confirm this.