

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>

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 not cancer.

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
- Tests 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**
- If you are unable to attend your appointment then let the hospital know immediately so that it can be offered to someone else and arrange another appointment
- 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