

## Patient information for urgent referrals

### This information sheet explains why your dentist or optometrist has referred you urgently to hospital and what you need to do

#### Why have I been referred urgently to hospital?

You've been referred urgently because your dentist or optometrist feels your symptoms need further investigation to rule out the possibility of cancer. You can expect to be seen quickly to find out what is wrong with you.

#### Does this mean I have cancer?

There are many common conditions that these symptoms could be linked to, including cancer. However, most people who have an urgent referral don't have cancer. In the event that cancer is diagnosed, then ensuring that the diagnosis is made early means treatment is likely to be more effective. This is why it is important that you are seen urgently.

**This referral is urgent. You will be offered a telephone or face-to-face appointment with your hospital within 14 days. You may need to be available for further tests over the next four weeks to receive a diagnosis quickly. Please make sure that you are available during this time.**

#### What does your Dentist or Optometrist need to know?

- Make sure your dentist or optometrist has your correct address and telephone number including a mobile number if you have one as the hospital may contact you by telephone.
- If you are unable to attend an appointment within the next two weeks, please tell your dentist or optometrist.
- If you need a translator, have access needs or would like a woman consultant, please let the hospital know in advance of your appointment.
- If you have not received an appointment from the hospital within two weeks, please contact your dentist or optometrist who referred you. Alternatively, if you know the hospital where you have been referred, you can contact their [Patient Advice and Liaison Services \(PALS\) department](#).

#### What will happen next?

The hospital will contact you to arrange an appointment. Your initial appointment with the hospital may be a telephone or video call with a nurse specialist. The nurse specialist will find out more about your symptoms. Alternatively, you may have a face-to-face appointment with a specialist.

**Please note:** *You must notify the clinician if you intend to record the call or include a friend or family member on the call.*

The hospital will send you instructions about your in-person appointments or the tests that you are likely to have on the day you attend the hospital. Please check these instructions carefully for up-to-date advice about preparing for your appointment.

Once you have agreed your date with the hospital, it is very important that you attend. Please call the number on your confirmation letter to let the hospital know immediately if you are unable to keep your appointment.

### **What will happen at the hospital?**

When you have your hospital appointment, you will usually see a specialist or have a diagnostic test. You will be told in advance if you need to have any tests during your appointment, so please ensure you follow any instructions given to you in advance. Be prepared that these appointments may take a few hours depending on waiting times and which tests you need.

You will be contacted about the outcome of the tests within 28 days of your referral, but you may be told the outcome of your tests on the day. You may want to bring a friend or family member with you for support or if you have concerns about understanding what the medical team will discuss with you. Please check your letter for guidance about visitors.

### **Any questions?**

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your referral to hospital, please call the GP surgery or to speak to the dentist or optometrist who referred you.

If your symptoms worsen before your appointment or persist after cancer has been ruled out please contact your GP.

### **Useful links for further information**

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/>

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support>

**An approximate timeline for your investigations and results are given below but may be longer if your symptoms are complex or you require multiple tests.**

