

URGENT “Two-Week Referral”

Patient Information Leaflet

Important COVID 19 / Coronavirus Information

Your safety and the safety of NHS staff is very important.

If you become unwell before your appointment or have to self-isolate because a family member is unwell please contact the hospital to let them know – **DO NOT GO TO THE HOSPITAL WITHOUT SPEAKING TO THEM FIRST**

During the Coronavirus period, it is likely that you will have a telephone call first from the hospital. The hospital team will discuss with you what happens next. This may include planning your investigations for a time when there is less risk of you getting coronavirus.

PLEASE TELL YOUR GP PRACTICE IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO MANAGE A TELEPHONE CALL.

If you do not get a call within 2 weeks please contact the Trust by telephone **0191 445 2995**. Please remember that you must take only-one person with you if you need to be supported to get to your appointment.

If you cancel an arranged appointment or do not attend your appointment, the hospital will do their best to ensure you are seen as soon as possible, but you will no longer be covered by your right to be seen by a specialist within 2 weeks as described in the NHS Constitution.

What will happen at my appointment?

In order to help your specialist, understand the cause of your symptoms you may be required to undergo some tests. Depending on the nature of your symptoms these tests may be required at different stages. The tests may be needed either:

- before you see your specialist,
- during your first appointment with the specialist,
- or the specialist may refer you for these tests following your first appointment.

Details on what will happen at your first appointment, and any tests you might need, will usually be sent with your appointment confirmation. The hospital will send you the relevant information after your appointment has been booked. If you do not receive this information or have any further questions please contact the person who referred you to the hospital.

You may find it useful to write down any questions you want to ask during your appointment. The specialist team will give you a lot of information and many people find it useful to take a friend or relative along with them. You are very welcome to do so but only one person should accompany you.

You may be offered a test as your first contact from the hospital. Please follow careful social distancing to minimise contact with others and careful regular handwashing for 14 days before any tests or this may cause an unnecessary delay.

What does it mean to be urgently referred?

An urgent two-week referral usually means that you will be offered an appointment with a hospital specialist within 2 weeks of your General Practitioner (GP), General Dental Practitioner (GDP) or Optometrist making the referral.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, you are likely to be offered a telephone appointment as your first contact.

The timescales for your first contact may be different at this time.

Why am I being urgently referred?

Your GP/GDP/Optomtrist feels that you have symptoms that require investigation by a hospital specialist as soon as possible. This is so that your illness can be diagnosed and treated quickly and effectively.

Whilst this does include the possibility of cancer, the majority of people referred in this way **do not** have cancer. The signs and symptoms you have may be caused by a number of common conditions but it is important that the hospital know about your GP's concerns in order to fully investigate your condition.

It is important to remember that even though you are being referred urgently, this DOES NOT necessarily mean that you have cancer.

How do I make my appointment?

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the hospital may contact you by telephone first.

Tell your GP if it is difficult for you to manage a telephone call.

How do I get to hospital?

If you cannot use public transport, drive or arrange your own transport you may be able to use the ambulance service. Please speak to the receptionist at your GP surgery as soon as possible if ambulance transport is required.

Please remember to only take a maximum of one person with you if you need to be supported to get to your appointment.

What if I can not make the appointment I am offered?

Your GP/GDP/Optomtrist believes that your symptoms need to be investigated as soon as possible so it is important that you are flexible when arranging this appointment. You should make every effort to attend the 1st appointment you are given which may be a telephone contact at this time.

However, if you cannot make the appointment you are given, please contact your GP/GDP/Optomtrist surgery as soon as possible so an alternative can be arranged.