

Handy Hints

- Check that the GP practice has your up to date contact details.
- If you do not get your appointment details within a week, contact your GP practice and tell them it is an urgent suspected cancer referral.
- A call from the hospital or surgery may be from an unknown number.
- Try to bring a family member or friend with you for support.
- Think about arranging transport, time off work or child-care for the day of your appointment.
- Make sure you know where you are going.
- Allow extra time in case it takes longer than you expect.
- Make sure your mobile phone is charged.
- Ask how long it will take to get your results and make a note of it.
- Bring a pen and paper with you to make notes.
- Some people can claim for help with transport to hospital. <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/>

Urgent Suspected Cancer Referral (USC) Patient Information Leaflet

What is an urgent suspected cancer referral?

Your GP has arranged an urgent assessment by a specialist team. This is to investigate your symptoms. You may have some tests to find out what is wrong and if it could be cancer.

A USC referral means that you should be given information about whether you have cancer or not within 28 days of the referral being received by the hospital.

How is my appointment made?

You may be given your appointment by the GP practice, or the hospital may contact you by telephone or letter in the next few days.

- Check the GP practice has your up to date contact details

If you do not get a call or appointment within 1 week, please contact the hospital by telephone **0191 427 7575**.

Tell your GP practice if it is difficult for you to manage a telephone call or if you have any other communication needs.

What if I cannot make the appointment offered?

It is very important that you attend your appointment. If you can't make it, contact the hospital on **0191 427 7575** as soon as you can to rearrange it.

Your GP believes your symptoms need to be investigated as soon as possible. It is important that, if possible, you are flexible when arranging this first appointment. This may be a telephone appointment.

How do I get to the hospital?

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

Why am I being urgently referred?

The signs and symptoms you have may be caused by some common conditions, but it is important that the hospital knows about your GP's concerns so that they can investigate your condition including checking for cancer.

Most people referred on an urgent suspected cancer referral **do not** have cancer.

What will happen at my appointment?

Details on what will happen at your first appointment, and any tests you might need, will usually be sent with your appointment confirmation.

For many people, the first contact from the hospital might be by telephone. The team will discuss your referral and you may be offered a test as your first appointment. In some cases, the specialist team will review your case and no tests will be needed.

To help your specialist to understand the cause of your symptoms you may need some tests. The tests may be needed either:

- Before you see your specialist
- During your first specialist appointment
- Or, arranged by the specialist after your first appointment.

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 for support.