

# 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.

## 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.**

## 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 541 0015**.

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

## What if I cannot attend the appointment offered?

**It is very important that you attend your appointment.** If you can't make it, contact the hospital on **0191 541 0015** as soon as you can to re-arrange it.

Your GP believes your symptoms need to be investigated as soon as possible. Your first appointment with the specialist is very important, wherever you can please make it a priority. This appointment may be by telephone.

## 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 patient transport service.

Call the number of the service **where you live:**

Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Washington, North Tyneside, South Tyneside book via North East Ambulance Service – 0191 2151515.

County Durham (Durham Dales, East Durham, North Durham) book via the Travel Response Centre – 03000 269 999

Teeside and Darlington book via the Transport Information Service– 01642 263122

North Cumbria book via North West Ambulance Service – 08000 323240

Some people can claim for help with transport to hospital. Contact NHS Business Services Authority on 0300 330 1343 for more information.

## **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 with you.

To help your specialist to understand the cause of your symptoms you may need some tests eg blood tests, scans. 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.

In some cases, the specialist team will review your case and no tests will be needed.

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 helpful to take a friend or relative along with them for support.

## **Handy Hints**

- If you do not get your appointment details within a week, contact the hospital first. If you have problems contacting the hospital, then contact your GP practice and tell them it is urgent suspected cancer referral.
- A call from the hospital or surgery may be from an unknown or withheld telephone 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.
- Let the hospital know if you require a translator.