

# **Urgent Suspected Cancer Referral**

Patient Information Leaflet

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

Your General Practitioner (GP) General Dental Practitioner (GDP) or Optometrist 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.

### **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 GP/Dentist/Optometrist making the referral.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you are likely to be offered a telephone appointment as your first contact with the hospital. The timescales for your first contact may vary during this time.

Make sure that your GP (or dentist) has your correct address and telephone number, including your mobile number.

Please tell your GP practice if you are unable to manage a telephone call.

If you have not been contacted by the hospital after 2 weeks of seeing or speaking with your GP and being given this leaflet, please telephone the hospital directly on the numbers below

East Kent Hospitals - 01227 864240

Medway Hospital - 01634 833891

Darent Valley Hospital- 01322 428750 or email [dgn-tr.cancerreferral-dvh@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.cancerreferral-dvh@nhs.net)

Maidstone Hospital - 01622 224519

## About your referral:

To help combat the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), it is likely that the hospital will contact you by telephone, prior to your referral appointment. The hospital team will advise and discuss with you the next steps about your healthcare. This will cover information about any tests that the hospital team would like you undergo, and this may include planning your investigations for an alternative or later date, when there is less risk of you getting COVID-19.

**Please note:** In some cases, where this is feasible, arrangements for a face to face 'video' consultation with the specialist clinician may be possible.

## What if I become unwell?

If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 including a fever and/or new persistent cough whilst awaiting your appointment, or if you need to self-isolate because a family member is unwell, please contact the hospital on the above number, to let them know. **Do not go to the hospital or your appointment without speaking to them first.**

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

## What if I cancel or cannot attend my appointment?

Your GP/Dentist/Optometrist 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 first appointment you are given, which may be via telephone, during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, if you cannot make the appointment you are given, please contact the hospital as soon as possible, so an alternative can be arranged.

If you cancel an arranged appointment without notice, or do not attend your appointment, the hospital will do their best to ensure you are seen as soon as possible.

## How do I get to hospital?

If you cannot drive or arrange your own transport, or public transport is limited, you may be able to use the patient ambulance transport service. Please speak to the receptionist at your GP practice as soon as possible if this is something you require. **If you need to be supported to get to your appointment, a maximum of one person should attend with you.**

## Your appointment

### 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 GP/Dentist/Optometrlist who referred you to the hospital.

You may find it useful to write down any questions you want to ask during your appointment and have them with you, to refer to. 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. **All hospitals are being asked to protect patients and staff by reducing the number of visitors to their sites where possible. If you are unable or prefer not to attend alone, please remember only one person should accompany you.**

For more information about your urgent suspected cancer referral, visit Cancer Research UK: Your urgent referral explained <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/>

Support for anyone affected by cancer or awaiting investigations can access this on the Macmillan website [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk). The Macmillan Support Line is currently available 7 days a week , 9am – 5pm (0808 808 00 00).

Free cancer information is also available through the be.macmillan website (<https://be.macmillan.org.uk>)