Thames Valley Cancer Alliance

NHS Thames Valley

Patient information for urgent suspected cancer referrals

This information leaflet explains why you have been referred to hospital, what it means and what you need to do.
It is available in other languages and Easy Read.
Ask your GP practice for a printed version or download a copy from the Thames Valley Cancer Alliance website:
thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk/your treatment

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Why have I been referred urgently to hospital?

You have been referred urgently because your health practitioner feels you might be at risk of cancer and your symptoms need urgent further investigation.
You can expect to be seen quickly to find out what is wrong with you. The appointment is very important.

Does this mean I have cancer?

There are many conditions that your symptoms could be linked to, including the possibility of cancer.
Most people who are referred urgently do not have cancer.

Attending your appointment

If cancer is diagnosed, an early diagnosis means treatment is likely to be more effective.
This is why is it important that you are seen early. You should be given a diagnosis within four weeks.

Please make every effort to attend the first appointment you are given, which may be via telephone.
If you cannot make the appointment or test you are given, please contact the hospital as soon as possible, so an alternative can be arranged.

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What does your GP practice need to know?

Make sure your practice has an up-to-date home address and telephone number, including a mobile number, as the hospital may contact you via telephone.

You may be invited straight to test or investigation. This could be anytime from the day after your referral is sent by your health practitioner.

Please tell your GP practice if you are unable to manage a telephone call or need an interpreter and they will inform the hospital. Also inform your GP practice if you are unable to attend appointments within the next four weeks.

What will happen next?

You will be contacted to discuss the next steps; this could be via phone or letter.

Please make sure your contact details are up to date. If you require any tests, you may be sent information with more details.

How do I get to an appointment/test?

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.

When you are contacted about your hospital appointment, please let the hospital booking team know.

What to do if you have not heard within one week?

You will be informed at the time of referral what to do if you have not heard within one week.

If you are unsure about who to contact, please discuss with your GP practice.

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This is understandably going to be a worrying time for you.
There is help and support available should you have any questions or concerns please see below.

macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support

cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-symptoms/what-is-an-urgent-referral

Local Contacts:

Buckinghamshire Healthcare
Urgent Suspected Cancer Office: 01296 831600

Oxford University Hospitals
Urgent Suspected Cancer Office: 01865 231404

Royal Berkshire Hospital
Cancer Referral Team: 0118 322 6881