



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Understanding Why You Have Been Referred To Hospital

Trust wide Information :Royal Liverpool Hospital Sites

Your family doctor (GP) has asked for you to have an urgent hospital appointment within two weeks. The 'two week' appointment system was introduced so that patients with symptoms that **could** be caused by a serious problem, possibly even cancer, would be seen by a specialist as quickly as possible.

Why has my GP done this now?

GP's can diagnose and treat many problems themselves. However, on occasions they may need to arrange for you to see a hospital doctor that specialises in your particular problem. This may be because:

- Your GP feels your symptoms need further investigations urgently.
- The results of the investigations your GP arranged appear abnormal.

Does this mean that I have cancer?

No it doesn't. The majority of patients referred under the 'two week' scheme do not have cancer but a more simple or benign problem. For example fewer than 1 in 25 patients referred with a change in their bowel habit or bleeding from the back passage will have a bowel cancer.

What symptoms might make my doctor want to refer me urgently?

- A cough for more than three weeks, or coughing blood
- Hoarseness of the voice for more than six weeks
- A lump which does not go away
- A sore or skin ulcer which does not heal
- A change in the size, shape or colour of a mole
- Abnormal bleeding
- Indigestion which doesn't go away, or keeps coming back
- A change in bowel or bladder habits
- Unexplained weight loss.

Your GP will use national guidelines to help him or her make a decision about referring you to hospital

Why is the 'two week' system necessary?

The system was designed to ensure that patients who could have cancer are diagnosed and treated quickly. This is because many cancers are more likely to be cured if they are treated early. We appreciate that this will be a worrying time for you, but hopefully you will be reassured that your GP is taking the problem seriously and that you will not be waiting too long to get an exact diagnosis.

What happens now?

You will have been given a first hospital appointment with this information leaflet.

It is very important to keep this appointment.

If for any reason you are not able to attend, please contact the hospital on the numbers provided in your appointment letter as soon as possible. You will also be given information about what will happen during and after your first appointment. A specialist nurse will also be available to support you and give you more information, as you need it.

It is important to remember that even if you are getting an urgent referral, this does not mean that you have cancer. Most people who have an urgent referral do not turn out to have cancer.

What can you do to help?

- Try to keep all appointments arranged for you including any tests
- If you really need to change an appointment please try and make yourself available for a further appointment as soon as possible.

Further Information

You can get more details about the two week referral system and cancer specific information from the web sites below:

www.macmillan.org.uk

Tel: 0808 808 0000

www.mccn.nhs.uk

Web only

www.canceradvice.co.uk

Web only

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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