

Urgent Suspected Cancer Clinic

Why have I been referred to an Urgent Suspected Cancer Clinic?

Your GP or another health professional has decided with you that you need some tests to investigate your symptoms or the findings on your scan. These symptoms and scan findings can sometimes be early signs of a cancer in your womb, ovary or fallopian tubes, cervix or vulva. Over 97% of the patients that attend this clinic will be reassured that they do not have a cancer of their reproductive organs.

Why have I been asked to attend after my scan?

Your scan may have shown that your womb lining is slightly thickened or that there is a cyst or lump within your ovaries. In most cases, this is nothing worrying. A small proportion of people with thickening of their womb lining on their scan, will have a womb cancer or cells that may develop into a cancer (precancerous cells). Ovarian cysts are very common but very few are cancerous. We would recommend that you are checked to see whether your scan findings are anything to be worried about.

You may have had a normal scan but because you have not been examined by your referring clinician, we would like to offer you an examination to look for other causes of your symptoms.

What will happen at my appointment?

During your appointment, you will be asked about your symptoms and have a pelvic examination. If your scan was reassuring, this may be all that is required.

If you have thickening of the womb lining, you may also be offered extra tests that will help us to find out if you have a cancer. This may include having a small sample of tissue taken from the womb lining called a biopsy. The biopsy is taken using a thin, straw-like device called a Pipelle sampler, which is gently passed through the neck of the womb. The procedure only takes a few minutes, and you will be allowed to leave straight after.

Biopsies can be taken even if you are experiencing bleeding. Do let your clinician know if you are experiencing heavy bleeding or if you are on blood thinners. If you have yet to go through the menopause, we will ask to do a urine pregnancy test before a biopsy.

Is having a biopsy painful?

Most people describe the feeling of having a womb lining biopsy as a period-like cramping. It lasts for a few seconds and quickly gets better when your clinician has completed the biopsy. We would advise taking some over the counter pain relief such as paracetamol 1-2 hours before your appointment to reduce any discomfort. You may also be offered a local anaesthetic and/or gas and air (Entonox) if you are worried that you might find the procedure too uncomfortable.

Do I need to do anything different after my biopsy?

You may experience aching and some light bleeding after a biopsy. The aching usually settles within a few hours. Any bleeding should settle within a few days to become a dark or brown discharge. This can last for up to 3 weeks. Please see your GP as you may need antibiotics if:

- the bleeding becomes very heavy
- the pain becomes very severe
- you have an unpleasant smelling discharge
- you develop a fever (high temperature)

You may wish to take it easy for the rest of the day, but many people choose to go to work or resume their normal activities later the same day. It is safe to have a shower or a bath after your biopsy, but you should avoid intercourse until after your bleeding or discharge has settled.

When will I get results?

If you have had a biopsy this will need to go off to the lab for further testing. It can take between 2 and 4 weeks to get these results. We will usually write to you with these results if they are reassuring.

We will discuss with you whether you would prefer to receive abnormal or uncertain results by telephone or face to face. Most people prefer to receive these types of results by telephone as this means that they get their results as soon as they are available. These results are given by our consultant nurses and nurse practitioners. This means you will have an opportunity to discuss next steps with a healthcare professional. We do not usually schedule a time for that telephone call as sometimes we will receive your results earlier than 2 weeks and at other times it can be longer if more tests need to be done on your sample.

If you are worried that you have not received your result or need more support whilst awaiting your result, please contact one of our Early Diagnosis Support Workers on the number given below.

What will happen if I need further tests?

You will be informed by the team if you need further tests such as scans or blood tests. This may mean further visits to Liverpool Women's Hospital or to our partner hospitals around Merseyside. You will be offered the next available appointment at any of these hospitals. This is so that you can get all your tests done as quickly as possible.

If you have any queries or concerns, please phone:

Liverpool Women's Hospital
Monday – Friday 09:00 hours – 16:00 hours

0151 702 4328 option 3 to speak to the Rapid Access Clinic Co-ordinator to rearrange your appointment.

Or

0151 702 4131 to speak to one of our Early Diagnosis Support Workers if you are worried about your results or the dates of your next appointments.

Or

0151 702 4140 to speak to the nursing staff in the Gynaecology Emergency Department if you have worsening symptoms that cannot wait until your next appointment.

Or telephone your GP

This leaflet can be formally translated on request via our Patient Experience Team, although response times to have information translated can vary. To request formal translation services or if you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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Issue Date: 09/04/2025

Reference: Gyn_2025-395-v1

Review Date: 09/04/2028

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