

Scotland



Your  
urgent  
referral  
explained

## What is an urgent referral?

Your GP has arranged for you to see a hospital doctor (specialist) urgently. You may have some tests to find out what is wrong and whether or not it could be cancer. This is called an urgent suspicion of cancer referral.

**9 out of 10 people**  
referred in this way are not diagnosed with cancer.



## 1 What happens now?

- An urgent referral will be processed as quickly as possible and an appointment arranged for you.
- **It's important to go to the appointment.** If you're unable to attend, contact the hospital as soon as possible to rearrange.
- You may receive a phone call from the hospital about your referral. This could be an 0800 number (from NHS Scotland).
- If your symptoms get worse, contact your GP practice.



## Handy Hints

- Check your GP has your current contact details.
- If you don't get your appointment details within two weeks, contact your GP practice. Tell them it's an urgent suspicion of cancer referral.

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## 2 Going to your appointment

- Your appointment letter will include: the time, where to go, who you're seeing and anything you need to do to prepare.
- You may be sent straight for tests, or you might see a specialist first.
- You may need to describe your symptoms again. It could help to write things down in advance.

## Handy Hints

- Think about arranging transport, time off work or childcare for the day of your appointment.
- Make sure you know where you're going.
- Allow extra time in case it takes longer than you expect.
- Try to bring a family member or friend with you.
- Make sure your mobile phone is charged.

### 3 Having tests

- You may need to have more than one test.
- Call the number on your letter if you have any questions.

### Handy Hints

- The person testing you will not usually be able to tell you your results. You may have to wait to speak to your specialist or GP.
- Ask how you will get your results, how long it will take and make a note of this.
- Ask who to contact if you wait longer than expected for your results and make a note of this.

You can find  
information about  
different types of tests at  
[www.cruk.org/urgentreferrals](http://www.cruk.org/urgentreferrals)

## 4 Waiting for your results

- Your specialist, or sometimes your GP, will tell you your results.
- You may need to have further tests.
- The time it takes to receive your results varies – you may have to wait several weeks.



Don't be afraid to ask questions

## Handy Hints

- If you have been waiting for your results for longer than expected, contact your GP practice or the contact at the hospital if you were given one.
- If you have another appointment to get your results, try to bring a family member or friend with you.
- Bring a pen and paper to make notes.

## Useful contact details and information

You might have questions about your appointment or test results. Your GP practice can point you in the right direction.

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## What questions could I ask?

Sometimes it's difficult to know what to ask your specialist. Here are a few ideas that might make it easier:

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- If my symptoms get worse, who should I contact?
  - Should I make any changes to the medicines I'm taking?
  - What tests will I need to have?
  - How long will the tests take?

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- What will the tests feel like?
  - Do the tests have any side effects?
  - How long will it take to get my test results?
  - Who will give me the test results?
  - If I have questions after the appointment, who should I ask?

## Getting results

If you are diagnosed with cancer, you will be given lots of information by the hospital. Once you and your specialist discuss and agree on treatment, you should start this within 31 days.

If you aren't diagnosed with cancer, it's still important that you pay attention to your body. Tell your GP if you notice any new or unusual changes or if your symptoms don't get better.

A health scare makes some people think about improving their general health, for example by keeping a healthy weight or stopping smoking. These things reduce the risk of cancer.

If you'd like to know more go to [www.cruk.org/health](http://www.cruk.org/health).




For health  
information

Visit

[www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

Ask our specialist nurses

0808 800 4040\*



Let us  
help you  
find the  
answers

\*Phone lines open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday

## About Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK pioneers life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. From our volunteers and supporters to our scientists, doctors and nurses, we're all here to save more lives and prevent, control and cure all cancers.

If you would like to support our work, please call **0800 123 1861** or visit our website [www.cruk.org](http://www.cruk.org)

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