Why have I been referred urgently to the hospital?

Your General Practitioner (GP) or dentist has asked for you to have an urgent hospital appointment. Depending on your symptoms, this appointment may be to attend an outpatient clinic, a diagnostic test (such as an x-ray or endoscopy) or a combination of the two. If you are booked in for specific diagnostic tests, any risks or side effects will be explained to you.

The Urgent Suspected Cancer (USC) appointment system was introduced so that any patient with symptoms that might indicate cancer, or a serious condition such as cancer, could be fast tracked to see a specialist as quickly as possible.

Attending the first available offered is vitally important and will allow you to benefit from:

- An early diagnosis and earlier access to treatment, which is shown to improve health outcomes or, (help people to live longer with their cancer).
- In most cases, early reassurance that cancer has not been diagnosed.

Why would I need this appointment?

Many of the patients referred under the Urgent Suspected Cancer appointment system do not have cancer but have symptoms which need to be investigated to rule out cancer.

There are national referral guidelines for your GP or dentist to use when deciding about whether it is appropriate to refer you for an urgent appointment.

What are the symptoms that have led to me having this appointment?

- A lump that does not go away
- A change in size, shape or colour of a mole
- Abnormal bleeding
- A change in bowel or bladder habits (including increased frequency or bleeding)
- Persistent tiredness and/or unexplained weight loss.

What are the expected benefits of your Fast-Tracked Referral?

These appointments and / or tests will help a Specialist understand what is causing your symptoms and could help to diagnose a Cancer as early as possible. These tests and appointments usually exclude a diagnosis of Cancer.

What do I need to do now?

- Please take the **earliest** appointment offered to you. This includes your first appointment and **any further tests or investigations**. This helps us develop a treatment plan more quickly. This appointment could be at any of our hospital sites, i.e., Eastbourne, Hastings, or Bexhill Community Diagnostic Centre.
- Make sure your GP has your correct address and telephone number, including mobile number as you will be telephoned by the appointments team.

- If you **do not have** a confirmed appointment within one week of seeing you GP or dentist, contact the Fast Track Co-ordinator using the telephone number on this leaflet.
- **Please try not to cancel your appointment. Let the hospital know immediately if you are unable to attend your appointment**, so the time can be offered to someone else. It is **important** that you arrange an alternative date and time as soon as possible if cancelling.
- Please feel free to bring someone with you to this appointment. They can come in with you to see the Specialist if you wish.
- If you require an interpreter, please inform the Trust in advance. Please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) using the number on this leaflet.
- At the end of your hospital appointment, you will be given more information about what will happen next.
- If you are driving to your appointment, please note you need to pay to park (Pay on exit).

Sources of information

Conquest Hospital

Fast Track Co-ordinator
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Conquest Hospital
The Ridge
St Leonards on Sea
East Sussex
TN37 7RD
Tel: 0300 131 5038 (Monday-Friday 9.00am-5.00pm)

Eastbourne DGH

Fast Track Co-ordinator
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Eastbourne District General Hospital
Kings Drive
Eastbourne
East Sussex BN21 2UD

Tel: 0300 131 5489 (Monday-Friday 9.00am- 5:00pm)

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Dr David Sallomi; Consultant Radiologist / Clinical Cancer Lead ESHT
Dee Daly; Quality and Governance Lead for Cancer and Core Services, ESHT
Jane Farrow; General Manager, Cancer Services, ESHT
Dr Mathew Thomas; Clinical Director, NHS Sussex

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
ESHT Cancer Partnership Board

Next review date:	January 2026
Responsible clinician/author:	Dee Daly; Head of Quality and Governance for Cancer and Core Services.

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