Understanding Your Fast Track Referral

This information she is to help you understand your fast track referral.

What is a fast track referral?

Based on your symptoms, your GP has decided that you need to be referred to see a hospital specialist for further assessments and tests. "Fast track" means that you should see a specialist within two weeks of the referral being received by the hospital.

Why has my referral been fast tracked?

Your GP is concerned about the symptoms you have been having or their findings upon examining you and wishes to organise further tests to identify or exclude cancer. Sometimes, your GP may have already ordered tests which suggest that further investigations is needed.

Remember – Many people who are fast tracked **do not** turn out to have cancer, but for those who do, "fast track" referral means that diagnosis and appropriate treatment can begin as soon as possible.

What happens next?

Your GP surgery will send details of your symptoms to the hospital. You will then be contacted by the relevant hospital team. Sometimes the first contact with the hospital will take the form of a telephone consultation, during which your symptoms will be discussed with a member of the specialist team. Further investigations will then be arranged as required.

In other cases, you first contact with the specialist team may be at an outpatient clinic appointment or you may go straight to test for further investigations prior to an appointment with the specialist team. You should receive confirmation of your appointments in letters posted to your home address.

What do I need to do?

Please ensure that your GP Surgery has your contact details including your preferred contact address and that any mobile or landline telephone numbers are all up to date. This means the hospital will be able to contact you without delay once they receive the referral from your GP.

I can't attend my appointment what can I do?

Please made every effort to attend your appointment. It is important that you are flexible when arranging your fast track appointment and make every effort to attend the first appointment you are given.

If you are worried about asking your employer for time off work then it may be helpful to show them this leaflet to explain that you have received a fast track referral.

If you have a holiday booked, please advise your GP of the dates of this at the time of referral.

Due to the nature of your referral, it may be advisable to consider postponing your holiday and, in such circumstances, you can consider making an insurance claim for cancellation or postponement, of your holiday on medical grounds. If you do decide to go on holiday, it is advisable to notify your holiday insurance provider that your have been referred for further specialist tests.

Please note that it may be necessary for your initial hospital appointment to be delayed if you are unavailable for attendance within two weeks of referral due to a pre-booked holiday.

I'm worried about what this referral means and what is happening. Where can I get support?

It is natural to feel anxious and worried whilst awaiting further tests and results. Please do not hesitated to contact your GP practice if you need any further information about your referral or require additional support. Further help, guidance and support is also available on the Macmillan website. You can also contact **Macmillan Support and Information Centre** at the **Countess of Chester Hospital** on **01244 364948.**

What should I do whilst I'm waiting?

Check that your GP practice has your up to date contact details.

Make yourself available to attend hospital appointments.

Make sure that you attend for any additional tests that your GP may ask for while waiting for your hospital appointment e.g. a blood test or an x-ray.

Speak to your GP practice if you have any queries about the referral process, if there is a delay in hearing from the hospital regarding your first appointment please call the **Appointments Hotline** on **01244 366663**, they will be able to update you on your waiting time.