

## Department of Gynaecology

# Patient information leaflet – Gynaecological Urgent Suspected Cancer (USC) Referral

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You have been given this leaflet because you have been referred on the Gynaecological USC pathway at Wye Valley NHS Trust. This leaflet will explain why you have been referred, what is likely to happen while you are on the pathway and what to do if you need to contact the department or rearrange an appointment.



## **What is an Urgent Suspected Cancer (USC) referral?**

The USC referral has been introduced to ensure that specialists will see any patient with symptoms that might indicate cancer as quickly as possible.

## **Why has my GP referred me?**

GPs diagnose and treat many illnesses but may need to arrange for you to be seen by a specialist for some of the following reasons:

- The treatment already given by your GP has not worked.
- Your symptoms need tests that have to be done at the hospital.
- Tests arranged by your GP have shown results that are not normal.
- Your GP suspects cancer.

## **Does this mean I have cancer?**

This referral does not mean you have cancer. Most patients who are referred for a Gynaecology USC appointment do not have cancer.

## **How important is it for me to attend my appointment?**

It is very important that you are available to attend appointments for a 4 week period after your referral so that we can do any tests required and rule out cancer as soon as possible.

## **What symptoms might need a USC referral?**

- Persistent abdominal or gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g. bloating, pain)
- Lump or swelling in the abdomen
- Unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite
- Feeling unusually tired or weak
- Changes in your bowel habits
- Bleeding in between periods or after menopause
- Bleeding that continues for more than 6 weeks after stopping hormone replacement therapy
- Unusual or persistent vaginal discharge, especially if it's watery, smelly, or has blood in it.
- Pain during or after sex

- Persistent pelvic pain

## **What should I do if I can't attend an appointment?**

This is an important referral. Please tell the hospital when they contact you if you cannot attend an appointment you have been given. It is important to be available for appointments for 4 weeks after the referral is made. If you will be unavailable during this time please let your GP and the hospital know.

## **What do I need to do?**

Please make sure that the GP and the hospital have your correct address and telephone number (including a mobile phone number if possible).

If you have been asked to book an appointment please contact the Referral Management Centre at the hospital. The number is 01432 383100 – then select option 1.

Make sure you are available to attend appointments in the next 4 weeks.

## **What tests will I have?**

You might be seen by a specialist to assess what tests you need when you are referred or you might get an appointment for some tests before seeing the specialist.

These are some of the tests that patients referred to the Gynaecological pathway will have to investigate their symptoms.

## **Transvaginal Ultrasound (TVS)**

For this test, a small probe is gently inserted into your vagina to get clear pictures of your uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes. The procedure usually lasts between 15-20 minutes, and you may be asked to empty your bladder before the test.

## **Abdominal or Pelvic-Ultrasound**

A handheld device is moved over your stomach to capture images of your pelvic organs. A cool gel is applied to your skin to help the device make better contact. The process is painless and non-invasive.



## **CT (Computed Tomography)**

This is a scan which uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of the body. You lie still on a bed and pass through a ring-shaped machine.

You may be given a special dye to improve the quality of the images. This could be injected or swallowed. Further information will be given when you receive your appointment on how you need to prepare for this test.

## **Endometrial Biopsy**

A small sample of the lining of your womb is taken using a thin tube inserted through your vagina into your uterus.

## **Hysteroscopy**

A thin camera is inserted through your vagina into your uterus to examine the lining and take small tissue samples if necessary. A hysteroscopy is performed in an outpatient appointment or under a short, light general anaesthetic as a day case procedure and takes about 15 minutes. The surgeon looks at the cervix with a speculum in a similar way to when you have a smear taken. The cervix is gently dilated (stretched open) and a fibre optic telescope (hysteroscope) is inserted. A camera is attached to this and your surgeon can have a good look at the inside of the womb.

## **Colposcopy**

During this procedure, the doctor uses a speculum to gently open your vagina. They then examine your cervix and vaginal walls using a colposcope, a device with a magnifying lens. The colposcope does not go inside your body but allows the doctor to spot any changes. If necessary, the doctor may take small tissue samples from abnormal areas.

## **Laparoscopy**

This is a surgical procedure used to examine the inside of your abdomen. You can usually go home the same day as having the procedure. During the procedure, a thin tube with a light and camera are inserted through a small incision in your abdomen. This allows the surgeon to look at your ovaries and the surrounding areas. They may also take tissue samples if necessary.



## **What happens if I require a sedative for one of my tests?**

A sedative is a type of medicine, normally given as an injection that helps you to be more relaxed and comfortable for a test. This type of medicine will make you drowsy (sleepy) and you won't be able to drive home after the test.

If you are having sedation for your test you must bring someone with you who can take you home after the test and stay with you for 12 hours. This is because it takes time for the sedative to leave your body and you will need to rest.

If you need to have a sedative the specialist team will give you more information.

## **How will I be told about the results of my tests?**

Some patients are told about their results at an appointment with the specialist. This may be face to face at the hospital or over the phone.

Some patients are told about their results in a letter or a text message.

If you receive a text message with your results there will be a follow up letter with more detail for you and your GP.

We will never give you a cancer diagnosis over the phone or in a letter or text message.

If you don't want to receive a text message of your results ruling out cancer you can contact the Gynaecological Team on 01432 364091 or 01432 364129

## **Useful contact numbers**

Referral Management Centre: 01432 383100 – then select option 1

Radiology Department: 01432 804464

Gynaecological Team: 01432 364091 or 01432 364129



## Your experience matters

We aim to provide the care that we would want for ourselves, our families and friends. If you think something could have been done differently, please speak to the department or ward staff. You can contact them by calling the hospital switchboard and asking for the relevant department. Further information about our services is available on our website:

- **Phone (hospital switchboard):** 01432 355444
- **Wye Valley NHS Trust** [Wye Valley NHS Trust website](#)

This leaflet is available in alternative formats. If you need this please contact the Patient Experience Team using the telephone number or email below.

After using our services we may ask for your opinion about your experience. Your feedback helps us to make things better for all our patients.

You can also contact the Patient Experience Team by:

- **Phone:** 01432 372986 (please leave an answerphone message)
- **Email:** [PALS@wvt.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@wvt.nhs.uk)

