

Referral Information



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What is a referral?

Paston Surgery is a general practice and our doctors or Nurse Practitioners will ask for help to ensure they give you the correct diagnosis and best treatment. They have decided to refer you for either further investigations or to see another medical specialist.

Why am I being referred?

The specialist help or investigation is most likely to be one of the following: -

- You may have been referred for a specialist opinion on your condition from a consultant or their team. This is to help diagnose your condition or to help decide on the best management of your health problems.
- You may have been referred for an investigation (e.g. an x-ray or CT scan) or for a test which cannot be done at our Practice (e.g. gastroscopy).
- You may have been urgently referred to hospital to rule out the possibility of cancer. The referral is to see a hospital doctor or to have a test. Early diagnosis means treatment can start sooner with more chance of success.
- You may also be referred to the many community-based services. Some have clinics held at the Practice while others are at special other clinical centres.

What should I discuss with the doctor about my referral?

Your GP or Nurse Practitioner has discussed with you (or your carer) about why the referral is needed.

If you have the benefit of private medical insurance (e.g. BUPA) or wish to self-fund the referral, please let your GP or Nurse Practitioner know. The appropriate referral route can then be made.

Whenever possible, the NHS aims to provide you with a choice of where you are referred so that you can go to the hospital of your choosing. It is very important that the contact details we have for you are up-to-date and correct – you may check with our Reception team.

Let us know. If you're a military veteran and your treatment relates to an injury during your service.

I have to be referred, what happens next?

Some referrals are made through the "e-Referral" system, some by other electronic means and some still using a traditional referral letter.

It can typically take up to 10 working days for a referral to be prepared and sent to the appropriate hospital/clinical department for processing. Where a referral is extremely urgent, it is usually done the same day.

What type of Referral is being made for me

There are different types of referrals that can be made for you:

With routine referrals, you will be contacted about booking an appointment for the appropriate department. This may be phone call or letter.

Two Week Wait Referrals – some urgent referrals are known as a "two-week wait" (2ww) referral, and you should be seen as soon as possible (but not always within two weeks) from the time of consultation. You will be contacted directly from the hospital via the relevant department. With some serious

conditions, early diagnosis and treatment can considerably improve patient outcome. It is important that if you do not hear from the hospital within 3 working days, please contact them as below.

Other referral types – will either be sent electronically or will go direct to the hospital/clinical department and their team will contact you direct to make an appointment. Examples of these are x-rays, physical examinations i.e., colonoscopy.

Community Referrals – these are referrals to physiotherapy, occupational therapy etc. These referrals go straight to the relevant department, and they will normally contact you direct.

Please note: The method of referral is not always straightforward so if you have any queries, please contact our Practice Secretary for assistance on 01692 403015.

What information about me is shared with the hospital?

The referral letter will include a summary of any illness to date, why the referral has been made. Typically included is your name, address, date of birth, NHS number, telephone number, past medical history, current medications, allergies or sensitivities and details of investigations or tests that have been taken and the results.

By agreeing to the referral, it is assumed that you are also in agreement with us sharing sufficient and relevant personal information about you to the appropriate hospital/clinic. Without this consent it would not be possible to make the referral.

In an emergency situation the Doctor or Nurse Practitioner may directly contact the hospital to arrange your assessment. We would then provide a handwritten letter to go with you or a printout of your current record; this is to ensure the receiving clinician has all the relevant information to provide your continuing care at hospital. Doctors treating you at the hospital or community service can, with your consent, view your full medical record.

When should I hear about my referral?

**If you have not heard about an Urgent Referral within 3 working days,
please call them on 01603 286537 or 01603 287272.
Please accept the first appointment you are offered,
and we strongly advise you not to cancel or amend it.**

**For all other Routine Referrals, if you have not heard anything at all after 3 weeks,
please contact our secretary on 01692 403015 who will be able to
help look into the matter and provide you with further advice.**

What is the current waiting time to be seen?

Unfortunately, all clinical departments are under considerable pressure at the moment and there is a very wide variation in the waiting time to be seen.

This is especially due to the impact of the COVID-19 virus. Unfortunately, there are some significant waiting times depending on your condition, the department being sent your referral and how serious your condition is.

I feel very unwell and I am unable to wait – what can be done?

If your condition has worsened considerably since being referred, please contact us. Your doctor or Nurse Practitioner may wish to re-assess you.

However, every hospital/clinical department has their own assessment method to determine the urgency of a patient being seen. As a GP Practice we have no ability to influence this process. In the past, expediting letters might have had some impact but this is no longer the case.

If you contact the hospital, you have been referred to, they may provide you with an update or further advice. The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital can be contacted on 01603 286286.

Tests and Investigations

The specialist is responsible for acting upon the results of any test him / her requests and for informing you of the results.

If you haven't heard from the specialist about a test result, please ring the specialist's secretary at the hospital. Unfortunately, we may not know the result and will not know what the specialist intended to do with the information.

Prescriptions

If the specialist prescribes a new medication or changes one that you are on, please ask them to provide you with the first prescription. This may be on a white prescription that can be used in the hospital pharmacy, on a green one that you can take to your normal pharmacy or electronically to your nominated pharmacy.

If you are uncertain what changes the specialist is making, please ask them to explain it to you at the appointment. It saves you having to see your GP to discuss something he or she may only know of from a short letter of explanation.

Sick or Fit Note

If you need to be certified as unfit for work as a result of the treatment provided by your specialist (or therapist) he or she should issue a sick note when you are discharged from hospital or seen in the clinic. Please ask for one if you need it.

In summary, the specialists are responsible for:

- Looking after all your tests
- Providing prescriptions when needed
- Issuing a sick note if required
- Providing you with follow up appointments if necessary.

Any problems or queries?

If at any stage you have any queries or problems, please ask to speak to our secretary who will be very pleased to help you and can be reached on our main number, 01692 403015.