

Community Dental Service

Urgent referral to hospital



Why have I been referred to hospital urgently?

Your dentist has referred you urgently to a specialist because they feel your symptoms need further investigation.

This information leaflet explains:

- Why your dentist has referred you to hospital urgently
- What the two-week referral system is
- What you can do to help ensure you are seen quickly.

What is the two-week referral system?

This is an urgent referral for an appointment to see a specialist when a dentist is unsure about symptoms and unable to make a diagnosis.

There are many common conditions that these symptoms could be linked to. However, it is important to rule out that there are no underlying health issues including cancer.

The vast majority of patients referred this way are found not to have any serious disease but, for a lot of conditions, the sooner treatment can start the more successful it is. It is therefore important to get a diagnosis as soon as possible.

What does it mean to be urgently referred?

Your dentist sees and treats many common symptoms in relation to the mouth.

However, sometimes they may need to send you to see a specialist. This could be for several reasons, such as:

- Treatment already tried has not been effective
- Your symptoms have not gone away
- Your symptoms are like those of oral cancer.

With your consent your dentist will send your details urgently to a specialist. Usually this is the Oral and Maxillofacial Unit at a local hospital.

You will hear from the hospital within two weeks to arrange your appointment. This appointment may be face to face at the hospital, or it may be a telephone or video consultation.

If your first appointment is by telephone, you may be called from an unknown number – please answer this call.

If you have any concerns or questions about your referral to hospital, please contact your dental clinic and ask to speak to the dentist that referred you.

What will happen at my hospital appointment?

The specialist will assess you to determine if further investigations and/or tests are required. They will explain this in more detail and will tell you the results.

These tests could be blood tests, x-rays or scans such as computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

They may need to do a biopsy where a small sample is taken from any lesions in your mouth. These tests will help your specialist understand what is causing your symptoms and what treatment you need.

It is important that you attend all your hospital appointments, including clinic appointments and tests, to ensure that your symptoms are investigated as quickly as possible.

You may take someone with you to your appointments who can offer you support and reassurance.

You may also like to have a list of questions ready to ask.

What do I need to do?

- Make sure your dentist has your correct address and telephone number, including a mobile number if you have one.
- Contact your dental clinic if you have not been contacted by the hospital within a week of seeing your dentist.
- If you require a translator, transport or have limited mobility, please let the hospital know in advance of your appointment.
- It is very important that you attend the appointment once you have agreed it with the hospital – do not put it off.
- If you cannot attend your appointment, it is very important that you contact the hospital to make another one.

What happens if I miss my appointment?

You should make every effort to attend the first appointment you are given.

If you do not attend your hospital appointment on two occasions, you will be referred back to your dentist.

Contact information

Community Dental Clinic telephone numbers:

Ashton, Leigh & Wigan	Leigh Health Centre	01942 777 910
	Pemberton Health Centre	01942 777 920
Altrincham	Altrincham Health and Wellbeing Centre	0161 470 4394
Bolton	Lever Chambers	01204 403 215
Bury	Moorgate Primary Care Centre	0161 470 4430
Chester	Fountains Health Centre	01244 385 563
Heywood	Phoenix Centre	0161 470 4411
Oldham	Integrated Care Centre	0161 470 4433
Rochdale	Nye Bevan House	0161 470 4468
Runcorn	Hallwood Health Centre	01928 593 400
Sandbach	Ashfields Primary Care Centre	01270 275 151
St Helens	St Helens Dental Clinic	01744 731 395
Stockport	Kingsgate House	0161 204 4720
Tameside & Glossop	Ashton Primary Care Centre	0161 342 7150
	Union Street Clinic, Hyde	0161 366 2263
Warrington	Bath Street Health & Wellbeing Centre	01925 946293
Widnes	Healthcare Resource Centre	0151 495 5042
Winsford	Dene Drive Primary Care Centre	01606 544188

Further information

Information about the “two-week” referral system and other information about cancer and support can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer/>

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/head-and-neck-cancer

www.cruk.org

Please note that website URLs and content locations may change over time. While we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date links, we cannot guarantee that all external websites will remain available or unchanged.

If a link no longer works, we recommend searching for the content directly through a search engine or visiting the homepage of the referenced site.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.