

## **NHS referral FAQs**

### **How long does a referral letter take to get to the specialist?**

All letters other than Fast Track referrals take 5-10 working days for our secretaries to process. Fast Tracks are forms and are sent the same day you are seen.

### **How urgent is my appointment?**

Your GP will write to the specialist detailing your symptoms/examination. Based on these findings referrals are sent as:

1. Routine
2. Soon
3. Urgent – 2 Week Fast track for suspected Cancer

Different departments have different waiting times within these categories.

### **What happens when the referral reaches the specialist?**

The hospital team will look at the information provided by your GP and either accept the referral as being in the appropriate category or up or down grade it. They will then place you on a waiting list. Occasionally referrals are rejected by the hospital. If this happens you will be contacted by your GP.

### **How do I know where I am on the waiting list?**

You will receive an appointment directly from the hospital. Your GP cannot advise when your appointment will be. If you wish to check your progress on the waiting list, you can ring the Appointments Line at the relevant hospital:

- Countess of Chester 01244 366663. Wrexham Maelor 01978 291100

### **What if I am unhappy with the wait?**

The Appointments Clerk will normally advise that if you speak to your GP they may be able to speed up your appointment. Please be aware this is not a matter of just asking, information with regards to symptoms must be provided that proves you are clinically more urgent than a person currently ahead of you on the waiting list. This must be additional information to that provided in the original referral for the hospital team to re-triage your referral. If you think you have relevant additional information you will need to make a GP appointment to discuss it.

### **The specialist has organised some tests/a scan, can I get my results from the GP?**

No - the results of all investigations are returned only to the clinician who books them. Therefore, only your specialist will receive the results and only they will discuss them with you.

### **The specialist has suggested I start medication, how do I get it?**

If the consultant wants you to start medication immediately you will be given you a prescription for the hospital pharmacy – note that such prescriptions are only valid at the hospital pharmacy.

If the prescription is not urgent, they will write to your GP asking them to prescribe it. It can take several weeks for us to receive such letters so please allow up to a minimum of 28 days.

### **Why can't my GP give me a prescription?**

Drugs are categorised by the NHS as shown below. GPs can only prescribe green or amber drugs.

- **Over the counter** – Must be purchased by the patient at a chemist
- **Green** – Can be prescribed without supervision by your GP
- **Amber** – Can only be prescribed by your GP with supervision by a specialist (a 'shared care agreement'). Normally the specialist must start and stabilise the medication.
- **Red** – Specialist only prescription
- **Black** – Cannot be prescribed by any NHS doctor