

## Gynaecology

# Urgent Suspected Cancer (USC) pathway

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

You have been referred urgently to Imperial College Healthcare gynaecology department. This is because your GP thinks your symptoms might be gynaecology-related, and we need to investigate and rule out any serious conditions, including cancer. You will be under the care of a specialist gynaecology and clinical nursing team at the Trust.

Most people referred for suspected cancer investigations do not have cancer. However, it is vital that you have these tests done quickly. This way we can diagnose you and start your treatment quickly if necessary.

### What to expect

When your GP refers you to Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, we aim to book your appointment within one week. Importantly, we aim for people to be told whether they do or do not have cancer within 28 days. This allows us to start the first treatment, if needed, within 62 days of referral from your GP. You can help us to make this possible by:

- being available and as flexible as possible.
- making sure your GP has up-to-date contact information.
- keeping your appointments. If you can't attend an appointment, then please ring us on **020 3312 3665**.
- telling us about anything you might need for the appointment in advance, such as an interpreter or any changes to how we should communicate with you.
- booking hospital transport as soon as you have your appointment details. You can book hospital transport by ringing the transport team on **0300 678 1245**.

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## Understanding your pathway

These are the steps of the pathway.

- We receive your referral, our doctors make sure you have been sent to the correct service, and then we book an appointment for you.
- At our appointment you might have a scan, blood test and possibly a biopsy. We might also offer you a hysteroscopy on the same day. Please make sure you are available for half a day for this appointment in case you need to wait.
- We will check your biopsy results for any abnormality. This can take up to 10 days.
- If we do not find any abnormalities on our tests, we will send you a discharge letter and you won't have any more appointments with us.
- Sometimes we might need to do more tests such as CT or MRI scans.
- We might also invite you for an appointment with a doctor or clinical nurse specialist (CNS). This might be face-to-face or on the phone.
- We might need to talk about your results in our multi-disciplinary team meeting (MDT). This is a meeting where a group of health care workers discuss investigations and recommend a plan of management.
- We will invite you for a follow up appointment to discuss your results and recommend management. We will tell you about your diagnosis in this appointment.
- We will start treatment.

## What tests might I need?

- **Blood test** – We might test for special proteins in your blood that can sometimes indicate changes in your body. These could be signs of a particular condition or stage of life, such as your menopausal status.
- **Ultrasound** – We do most scans transvaginally (through the vagina) to get the best pictures, but occasionally may be done transrectally (through the rectum/bottom) or transabdominally (on the abdomen).
- **Hysteroscopy\*** – This procedure assesses the inside of the womb using a hysteroscope. This is a narrow telescope with a light and camera at the end. We do this procedure in an outpatient clinic. We will ask you to take paracetamol an hour before your appointment because some people experience discomfort. Your doctor or nurse can tell you more about what to expect.
- **Inpatient hysteroscopy\*** – This is a hysteroscopy done under general anaesthesia. If you have an inpatient hysteroscopy, you will need to have a pre-operative assessment, and we will tell you more about this. This is usually a day case procedure, meaning you don't have to stay overnight at the hospital.
- **MRI** – An MRI scan uses a combination of a magnet and radio waves to scan your body,

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which gives us detailed images of an area of your body.

- **CT scan** – This scan uses x-rays to take detailed pictures of your body from different angles, then puts together a series of pictures we can check.

\* Information leaflet available in the Rapid Access Clinic/Trust website

If you have any questions, please contact the rapid access clinic (RAC) CNS on 07350 379 369.

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

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