

DIAGNOSTIC CANCER PATHWAYS
Information for patients

IS-0478E

Assessment of patients with non-specific symptoms of a serious illness which could be cancer

You have been referred for assessment by the specialist health service because we suspect you may have a serious illness which could be cancer. If you are diagnosed as having cancer, your treatment will be planned in consultation with you.

You have been referred for assessment via the Diagnostic pathway. The Cancer pathways are intended to give patients and relatives predictability and security and are national standardised pathways which are discipline-based. The aim is to speed up patient assessments and the start of treatment and minimise waiting times. This will make the assessment process as predictable and stress-free as possible for you and those closest to you.

The pathways define the number of calendar days that each part of the assessment should take. These are called pathway timescales.

Pathway timescales are targets rather than absolute requirements. For some patients, there will be medical reasons why the pathway should be longer or shorter than the timescales stated in the national pathway.

• **Procedures and tests for suspected cancer**

The aim of the assessment and the procedures and tests you will undergo is to determine whether or not you have cancer. You may also be referred for assessment for another illness, or to another Cancer pathway if the assessment leads to suspicions concerning a specific form of cancer. Assessment via the Diagnostic pathway is carried out at a Diagnostic centre or an equivalent unit.

If the assessment shows that you have cancer, you will be referred to the pathway for

your particular form of cancer. You will be given information on possible treatments and what to expect next. You will be told about the procedures and tests that are relevant for you and when they will be carried out.

All hospitals that investigate and treat cancer have their own cancer pathway coordinators, who will make the necessary preparations for your assessment by booking appointments for your procedures and tests. You can contact the cancer pathway coordinator if you have any questions concerning practical matters relating to your assessment, appointments, etc. The cancer pathway coordinator is often a nurse, but he or she may also have a different professional background.

Medical questions will be answered by a doctor.

• **Assessment phases**

Your assessment will normally be completed within 22 calendar days. For medical reasons, it may sometimes take longer. The assessment period is the period from receipt of the referral by the Diagnostic centre or equivalent unit until the assessment has been completed and it has either been confirmed that you do not have cancer, or you have been given a diagnosis. The timescales are stated in the Diagnostic pathway.

The various phases of the assessment	Remarks	Recommended within:
<p>Phase 1: This is the period from receipt of your referral by the Diagnostic centre or equivalent unit until your first appointment for your procedures and tests in the pathway</p>	<p>The pathway coordinator will book the necessary appointments for your procedures and tests for you.</p>	<p>7 calendar days</p>
<p>Phase 2: This is the period from your first appointment for your procedures and tests in the pathway until your assessment is complete</p>	<p>During this period, procedures and tests are carried out to determine whether or not you have cancer.</p> <p>Once the results from the procedures and tests are available, it will normally be possible to say whether you have cancer. A decision concerning your diagnosis will normally be taken during a multidisciplinary team meeting.</p> <p>If you do not have cancer, the pathway will be concluded. If we still suspect that you may have cancer of unknown origin, further assessment will be individually based.</p>	<p>15 calendar days</p>

Patients with non-specific symptoms of a serious illness which fulfil the criteria for referral to a pathway for a specific form of cancer will be referred to the relevant Cancer pathway.

For more information, visit www.helsenorge.no/kreft. The Diagnostic centre or equivalent unit which assesses you will also be able to tell you more.

Notes