

# Being referred for tests and scans

The first health professional you are likely to see if you feel unwell or have any **symptoms of lymphoma** is your GP. If lymphoma is suspected, you are then referred to the hospital for further tests.

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## What tests can my GP do?

The first test you are likely to have is one carried out by your GP. They examine any enlarged (swollen) **lymph nodes**, which are glands that can appear as lumps. Examining your lymph nodes in this way alone doesn't tell your GP whether or not you have lymphoma; they should also ask you about any symptoms you might have and may send you for further tests at the hospital.

If the lump hasn't been there long (for up to a couple of weeks) or is very small, your GP may suggest waiting to see if it goes away and if your symptoms get better on their own. The same symptoms as seen in lymphoma are more commonly seen in other, less serious illnesses, such as an infection, like a cold.

If your symptoms continue, if they are severe, or if you have a lump that grows bigger, you should be referred for further tests.

Usually, it is not possible for a GP to confirm whether or not you have lymphoma. You need to be referred to a hospital specialist for further examination and a biopsy.

It's important to note that a referral for tests and scans does not automatically mean that you will go on to be diagnosed with lymphoma.

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## How long will I wait for a hospital appointment?

If your GP thinks there is a possibility that you have lymphoma, you should be seen quickly by a hospital specialist.

- In England and Ireland, you can expect to wait up to 2 weeks.
- In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, you should receive an appointment as soon as possible. Ask your GP how long you are likely to wait.

You may be given an appointment at quite short notice and it's important to attend if you can.

For some people, waiting for further investigations can cause a lot of anxiety. You might worry that the lymphoma could grow during this time. However, cancers generally grow slowly and waiting a couple of weeks should not affect your overall prognosis (outlook).

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## Can I be referred to my local hospital?

You should be automatically referred to the nearest possible hospital to continue your care but this might not be your local hospital. This is because

not all hospitals have lymphoma specialists or the equipment to carry out the tests and scans you might need.

In most cases, you have a right to choose which hospital you go to. See the [NHS Choices](#) website for more details.

We have more information about [tests and scans](#) you might have at the hospital.

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## References

- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2017. Recommendations on patient support, safety netting, and the diagnostic process. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2hOjYgS> (accessed September 2017).
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## Further reading

- [Waiting for your results](#)
- [Your medical team](#)
- [Glossary](#)

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