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| **Fast Track Referrals****during the Covid-19 pandemic** |
|  **What is a ‘fast track’ referral?**A fast track referral happens when a GP has concerns that a patient’s symptoms might suggest cancer.They make a referral to the hospital and an appointment to see a specialist is arrangedwithin two weeks.The hospital contacts the patient by telephone to schedule the appointment or any tests that need to be done. | **What will happen during the first contact with the hospital?**During your first contact with the hospital, the next steps will be discussed with you. These could cover information about any tests you may need and include scheduling them.The specialist may need you to go to the hospital for a test or they may decide it is more appropriate to delay – the decision will be made taking your overall safety and health into consideration.If an appointment with a specialist is arranged, it is likely to be a telephone call or online appointment (if the hospital offers virtual consultations). Please tell your GP if you are unable to manage a telephone call or online appointment.You may be offered an appointment to see the specialist at the hospital if it is decided you should be seen in person.The hospital will send you confirmation of your appointment or any preliminary tests.If you do not receive this information or have any further questions, please contact the GP who referred you. |
| **During the Covid-19 pandemic fast track referrals are still essential but they may be managed differently so please read this information carefully.** |
| You have recently discussed symptoms you have with your GP. They feel your symptoms should be investigated by a hospital specialist as soon as possible so the cause can be diagnosed quickly.They are concerned your symptoms could suggest cancer but it does not mean you have cancer. Your symptoms may be caused by a number of common conditions. |
| **How is it decided if you need tests?**To help the specialist understand the cause of your symptoms, you may need tests before your appointment. The hospital will advise you what tests should be carried out and will make arrangements for you.It may only be during your appointment that the specialist decides you should have tests and these will be arranged subsequently. If your appointment is at the hospital, any tests may be arranged while you are there. |
| **What can you expect from****a fast track referral?**The hospital will telephone you to arrange an appointment with a specialist. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this call may not be within two days as would normally be expected.Please remember to accept a telephone call from an unknown number andmake sure your GP has your correct address, email address and telephonenumber, including any mobile number.If you have not been contacted by the hospital within one week of your referral, please telephone the hospital you have been referred to.

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| **Hospital** | **Telephone number** |
| Dorset County Hospital | 01305 254109 |
| Poole Hospital | 0300 019 2823 |
| Royal Bournemouth Hospital | 0300 019 4741 |
| Christchurch Hospital | 0300 019 4740 – option 4 |

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| **What can you expect from a****telephone appointment?**You will be given a date and time when the specialist will telephone you.Remember, this is a formal appointment and you will have an allocated amount of time so make sure you are available to talk to the specialist. |