

Non-Specific Symptoms (NSS) Pathway

This leaflet is a guide only and gives you general information on your Non-Specific Symptom (NSS) Pathway. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions.

What is the Non-Specific Symptoms pathway?

The Non-Specific Symptoms (NSS) pathway is a service that has been set up to investigate patients with 'non-specific (vague) but concerning symptoms' that may be a sign of number of conditions including Cancer and provides access to urgent investigations and assessment.

What is the purpose of the Non-Specific Symptoms pathway?

Many patients visit their GP with vague or general symptoms such as weight loss or tiredness. These symptoms are called "non-specific" or "vague" as they are not specific enough to give a clear diagnosis after your GP has assessed you.

There is a very low chance these non-specific symptoms are caused by a serious disease such as Cancer. However, for some patients early tests can help doctors diagnose conditions quicker and start treatment sooner.

Why I have been referred to the Non-Specific Symptoms pathway?

Your GP has referred to the NSS pathway as they feel your symptoms need further investigation.

Does this mean I may have Cancer?

This does not necessarily mean you have Cancer. There are many common illnesses that may be causing your symptoms.

We need to find out what is causing your symptoms and start treatment as soon as possible. If Cancer is found, getting a diagnosis early means treatment may have better outcomes.

What happens next?

Once your referral has been made by your GP, you will be contacted by the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) to carry out a telephone assessment. Following your assessment, the CNS will discuss with you what happens next. This is likely to be one of the following:

- Need for further investigation such as CT-scan
- Onward referral to a specialist service if your symptoms suggest a particular health condition
- Other speciality referral for face-to-face assessment by the Non-Specific Symptoms Specialist or
- Referral back to your GP.

During your telephone assessment with the CNS, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss your on-going management.

Your appointment

Once you have been given your appointment it is very important that you attend.
You will be provided with further information regarding each test should you need it.

If you are asked to attend any appointment at the hospital we are happy for you to bring someone with you. This is often helpful when new information is being discussed and also if further tests need arranging.

Cancellations

If you are unable to attend your initial nurse triage appointment, with the CNS or need to change it, please contact the NSS Team as soon as possible (see below for contact details). Please quote your NHS number or name and date of birth, and explain that you wish to cancel an appointment in the Community Diagnostic Centre. The team can cancel your appointment and re-issue this to another patient, whilst arranging a new one for you.

NSS Team contact details

Telephone: 01342 414438

Email: qvh.nss-surreyandsussex@nhs.net

We may not be able to answer your call straight away. Please leave a message on the answer machine and we will return your call as soon as we can. Please remember to leave your name, date of birth, and hospital or NHS number.

If you have already completed your nurse led triage appointment but need to change or cancel your CT scan, please contact the QVH Radiology Team on 01342 414249.



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in a different format.

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