

## Any questions?

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact your consultant's secretary.

## Patient Information for Red Flag Investigations



This information leaflet explains why you have been referred as a red flag and what it means.

### Why have I been referred as a red flag to hospital?

You've been referred as a red flag because your GP or dentist feels your symptoms need further investigation as soon as possible and has referred you to a specialist. There are many common conditions that these symptoms could be linked to, including the possibility of cancer.

### What is a red flag?

Red flag is the term used across the Northern Ireland Health Service to speed up appointments when there is a possibility that your symptoms could indicate cancer. This ensures you will see a specialist as quickly as possible.

### Does this mean I have cancer?

Having a red flag referral does not necessarily mean you have cancer. **94%** of people who have a red flag referral don't have cancer. However, you have been referred because you need to see a specialist or have some investigations quickly to help find out what is wrong with you so it is important you attend.

If cancer is diagnosed, then ensuring that the diagnosis is made as early as possible means treatment is likely to be more effective. This is why it is important that you are seen as soon as possible once the referral has been made.

### What will happen next?

You require some further tests which will help the specialist team understand what is causing your symptoms. You will be told before your appointment if there is anything you should do to prepare for them. It is important to follow these instructions, to avoid tests being delayed.

### How long will I wait?

If you have been referred for red flag investigations following your initial appointment you should expect to receive a date within 2 weeks. If you do not hear from the hospital in this timeframe you should contact your consultant's secretary.

Once you have been given your appointment it is very important that you attend. Please let the hospital know immediately if you are unable to keep your appointment. The hospital will then arrange another appointment with you.

### How to contact us

#### **All Royal Hospitals**

028 9024 0503

#### **Belfast City Hospital**

028 9032 9241

#### **Mater Hospital**

028 9074 1211

#### **Musgrave Park Hospital**

028 9090 2000

If you have a general enquiry you can email us at: [info@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:info@belfasttrust.hscni.net)