

Being referred to the Rapid Diagnostic Centre

Information for patients

This sheet answers common questions about a referral to our Rapid Diagnostic Centre at the Royal Free Hospital. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

Why am I being referred to the Rapid Diagnostic Centre (RDC)?

You may be sent to our Rapid Diagnostic Centre if you have symptoms that your GP feels need to be investigated quickly. In some cases, these symptoms could be a sign of a serious condition, such as cancer. At the centre, our doctors and nurses will undertake tests so they can understand what is happening to you so they can provide you with a diagnosis as quickly as possible. This is almost always within four weeks of attending the centre.

A referral to our RDC does not necessarily mean that you have cancer. The specialists at the centre will investigate your symptoms quickly so that if there is a problem, it can be treated effectively. Finding cancer early makes treatment much more successful.

Before your appointment

Before visiting the hospital, your GP should have carried out a number of blood tests and urine sample tests. The results of these tests will be sent directly to us and looked at by the RDC specialist team. If your GP requires you to complete further tests before being referred to the RDC it is important you attend these.

What to expect at the appointment

You will be contacted by a member of our team after your referral who will explain what will happen next. It is important that you are available to be contacted in the days after your referral.

Most of our appointments will be virtual or via a telephone, but you may be asked to come to the hospital for a face-to-face consultation or for further tests. If you are asked to come to a face-to-face consultation, our clinic at the Royal Free Hospital is located on the first floor in room 19 and is part of clinic six.

After your appointment

The results of any tests or investigations will be examined by RDC specialists and discussed with you as soon as possible.

If no cause can be found for your symptoms you will be referred back to your GP with further recommendations.

If you are diagnosed with cancer or another condition, we will refer you to the appropriate specialist consultant doctor, or department, and provide you with all the support and information you may need.

Contact us

If you have any questions or require further information please contact us at:

Telephone: 020 7794 0500 extension 35827

Email: rf-tr.rdc@nhs.net

More information

For more information about the cancer services available at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/cancer-services

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email:

rf.communications@nhs.net

Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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