



Urgent Suspected Skin Cancer Teledermatology

Patient information factsheet

This leaflet answers common questions about the Urgent Suspected Cancer (USC, formerly 2 Week Wait) teledermatology service. If you would like further information, or have any worries, please speak to one of our team members.

What is teledermatology?

- Teledermatology is the use of a specialist magnifying camera to take photographs of your skin lesion.
- Your photographs will be reviewed by a consultant dermatologist and a decision will be made about whether you need to be seen in clinic at Whittington Hospital.

Who provides the service?

- This service is delivered by the Whittington Health Dermatology Service in collaboration with the Wood Green Community Diagnostic Centre.

Who can be referred, and why am I being referred to the USC teledermatology?

- If your GP thinks there is a possibility of skin cancer and you are suitable for the service then you can be offered the teledermatology service.
- The clinic you have been booked into aims to provide you with a quick diagnosis if you have a new or changing skin lesion.
- Please remember that most skin cancers are not life threatening and can be easily treated. Very few of our referred patients will be diagnosed with cancer.

What are the benefits of this service?

- You will have your images taken and reviewed sooner than if you were to wait for a face-to-face consultation.
- If you need a follow-up appointment, you will be directed to the correct clinic for a follow-up appointment, avoiding potential delays in your care.

How do I get a teledermatology appointment?

- Your GP will have referred you to the Whittington Health Dermatology Service suspected skin cancer pathway.
- After your referral was received, a member of the dermatology team will have looked at the information the GP provided and decided that this is the best service for you.
- A week after we receive your referral from your GP, you will have received a phone call offering you an appointment with this service. After the call, you will have received a text message confirming the date, time, and location. Due to the speed of the service, it is not possible to follow up with a letter.

What happens at my appointment?

- After booking in at reception you will meet with a medical photographer.
- They will explain what they are going to do, which includes obtaining your consent and taking the relevant photographs of your skin lesion.
- These photographs will be transferred electronically to a consultant dermatologist at Whittington Hospital, along with the referral letter from your GP and your signed consent form. This is done through a secure NHS IT network.

What happens after my appointment?

- The consultant dermatologist will carefully review your photographs and referral and assess whether you need to be seen again or not. They may be able to decide on the best treatment plan, in the same way as if you had been seen in a face-to-face hospital clinic.
- For some patients, the doctor will be able to diagnose your skin lesion, provide reassurance and discharge you back to your GP.
- Sometimes, the consultant may decide that you do need to be seen in person. If this is the case, you will be contacted and offered an appointment. If urgent, skin surgery may be offered on the same day as the appointment.
- Sometimes, the consultant may decide that you need treatment for a potential skin cancer. If this is the case, you will be contacted and offered a fast-track appointment.
- The consultant who reviews your photographs will write to you and your GP with the management plan, so you are kept up to date with what is happening with your care. This will usually be within ten working days of seeing the medical photographer.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

- **Q.** Does the consultant dermatologist have to see my skin lesion in person to identify what is wrong?
A. No. The photographs are high quality and taken by professional medical photographers. However, if the consultant is unsure about the diagnosis, they will ask to see you in a face-to-face consultation.
- **Q.** Do I need to do anything after my appointment?
A. You will receive a copy of the consultant's letter, which will explain what action, if any, you need to take next. The actions may include:
 - a) If you need to be seen face to face, we will contact you to offer you an appointment.
 - b) It may be that you don't need to be seen in hospital but will be managed by your GP. If this is the case, it will be clearly written in the letter. **It is very important** that if the letter says this, you call your GP practice and make the appointment so that your treatment, if any, can be started.
 - c) It could be that there is no further action needed and in which case you only need to go back and see your GP if you are worried about it.
- **Q.** Is this a safe service?
- **A.** Yes, this service is safe. It is already provided in many areas of the country and is an excellent way of helping patients to be seen more quickly without losing any quality in the care received.

Useful contacts

- Contact the dermatology team by calling 020 7288 5266.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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