

NICE: SUSPECTED CANCER RECOGNITION AND REFERRAL SYMPTOM REFERENCE GUIDE

KEY

- No time specified
- 2WW
- Routine
- Within 2 weeks
- Urgent
- Within 48h

- 2ww breast
- 2ww CRC
- 2ww gynae
- 2ww head and neck
- 2ww haematology
- 2ww lung
- 2ww OGD
- 2ww Sarcoma
- 2ww skin
- 2ww urology
- 2ww via Upper GI pathway
- Abdominal and pelvic USS
- Appointment with dentist within 2w
- Assess for other symptoms/signs
- CA-125
- Consider Paed referral
- CT/MRI within 2w
- CT/USS within 2w
- CXR
- CXR within 2w
- Direct access USS <2w
- Fbc within 48 hours
- Fbc, Ca++ + ESR/PV
- FOBT
- Gynae USS
- Immediate referral to Paediatrician
- Non-urgent referral via urology pathway
- Paediatrician appointment within 48h
- PSA + DRE
- Routine OGD
- Routine referral
- Routine USS
- Urgent CT/USS
- Urgent OGD
- Urine protein electrophoresis and BJP within 48h
- USS within 48h
- Xray within 48h

KEY

A: raised; 2ww: 2 week wait; 40+: 40 and over etc; BCC: basal cell carcinoma; CRC: colorectal cancer; CXR: chest Xray; ESR/PV: Erythrocyte sedimentation rate or plasma viscosity; Fbc: full blood count; FOBT: Faecal occult blood test; GOR: Gastro-oesophageal reflux; LUTS: Lower urinary tract symptoms; N/V: nausea/vomiting; OGD: upper GI endoscopy; SCC: squamous cell carcinoma; SOB: shortness of breath; USS: ultrasound scan; wbc: white blood cell.

NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS

APPETITE LOSS

Unexplained: consider: lung, upper GI, CRC, pancreatic, urological: 14
Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 19
With cough/fatigue/SOB/chest pain/weight loss 40+: 19
(or early satiety) persistent/>12x per month female 50+: 15

DVT: consider urogenital/breast/CRC/lung cancers: 14

DIABETES

New onset with weight loss 60+: 18

FATIGUE

Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 19
With cough/SOB/chest pain/weight loss/appetite loss (unexplained) 40+: 19
Persistent 16+: 22
Unexplained in women: 15

FEVER

Unexplained: 22
Unexplained with splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5

FINGER CLUBBING 40+: 20

INFECTION

(unexplained and persistent/recurrent) 16+: 22

JAUNDICE 40+: 18

NIGHT SWEATS With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5

PALLOR: 22

PRURITIS:

With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5

WEIGHT LOSS

Unexplained: consider: lung, upper GI, CRC, pancreatic, urological: 14
Unexplained with abdominal pain 40+: 2
Unexplained with rectal bleeding <50: 2
50+: 24
Ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
With cough/fatigue/SOB/chest pain/appetite loss 40+ never smoked: 19
With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5
With upper abdominal pain/GOR/dyspepsia 55+: 7
Unexplained in women: 15
With diarrhoea/nausea/vomiting/constipation 60+: 18
With back pain/abdominal pain/new onset diabetes 60+: 18
With Δ platelets/nausea/vomiting 55+: 7

BLEEDING

BLEEDING

Unexplained bruising, bleeding, petechiae: 22
Haematemesis: 30
Haemoptysis 40+: 6
Post-menopausal: 3
Rectal bleeding with abdominal pain/change in bowel habit/weight loss, IDA <50: 2
Rectal 50+: 2
Vulval: 3

LUMPS/MASSES

LUMPS/MASSES

Anal: 2
Axillary 30+: 1
Breast 30+: 1
Breast <30: 61
Lip/oral cavity: 13*
Lump increasing in size: 8
Neck (unexplained) 45+: 4
Neck (persistent and unexplained): 4
Penile (STI excluded): 10
Thyroid: 4
Vaginal/vulval (unexplained): 3

LYMPHADENOPATHY

Unexplained in adults: 5
Persistent in supraclavicular/cervical: 20
Generalised in adults: 22

PAIN

PAIN

Alcohol induced lymph node pain: 5
Back with weight loss 60+: 17
Back (persistent) 60+: 23
Chest (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
Chest (unexplained) with cough/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19

SKIN

SKIN OR SURFACE SYMPTOMS

Anal ulceration: 2
Bruising: 22
Nipple: unilateral changes (including those "of concern") 50+: 1
Penile skin of glans lesion/mass (STI excluded): 10
Petechiae (unexplained): 22
Skin change suggesting breast cancer: 1
Pigmented lesion with a weighted 7 point score >2: 9
Lesion suggestive of nodular melanoma: 9
Lesion suggestive of SCC: 9
Lesion suggestive of BCC: 61
Lesion suggestive of BCC concern that treatment delay may have a significant impact: 9
Vulval lump/ulceration (unexplained): 3

SKELETAL

SKELETAL SYMPTOMS

Back pain with weight loss 60+: 17
Back pain (persistent) 60+: 23
Bone pain (persistent) 60+: 23
Fracture (unexplained) 60+: 23

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

ANAEMIA (IDA)

60+: 2
With rectal bleeding 50+: 7
Without rectal bleeding <60: 24

ANAEMIA (NORMOCYTIC)

60+: 24
Visible haematuria women 55+: 25
Upper abdominal pain 55+: 30

BJP SUGGESTS MYELOMA: 5

Δ BLOOD GLUCOSE WITH VISIBLE HAEMATURIA IN WOMEN 55+: 25

CA-125 35+IU/ml: 12

Δ CA/LOW WBC AND CONSISTENT WITH MYELOMA 60+: 35

CXR SUGGESTS LUNG CANCER/MESOTHELIOMA: 6

DERMOSCOPY SUGGESTS MELANOMA: 9

DIABETES WITH WEIGHT LOSS 60+: 18

DRE SUGGESTS PROSTATE CANCER: 10

Δ ESR/PV AND CONSISTENT WITH MYELOMA: 35

FOBT + VE: 2

JAUNDICE 40+: 11

Δ PLATELETS WITH GOR/DYSPEPSIA/UPPER ABDOMINAL

PAIN: 30

Δ PLATELETS WITH NAUSEA/VOMITING/WEIGHT LOSS: 30

Δ PLATELETS 40+: 20

Δ PLATELETS WITH VISIBLE HAEMATURIA/UNEXPLAINED VAGINAL DISCHARGE 55+: 25

PSA ABOVE AGE SPECIFIC RANGE: 10

URINE PROTEIN ELECTROPHORESIS SUGGESTS MYELOMA: 5

USS SUGGESTS OVARIAN CANCER: 5

USS SUGGESTS TISSUE SARCOMA: 8

XRAY SUGGESTS BONE SARCOMA: 8

NEUROLOGICAL

NEUROLOGICAL

Loss of central neurological function (progressive): 17

ORAL LESIONS

ORAL LESIONS

Ulceration (unexplained, >3w): 4
Oral red/ red-white patches: 15*

RESPIRATORY

RESPIRATORY

Chest infection (persistent) 40+: 20
(Unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
Chest pain (unexplained) with cough/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19
Cough (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
Cough (unexplained) with chest pain/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19
Hoarseness (unexplained and persistent) 45+: 4
Chest signs consistent with cancer/pleural disease 40+: 20
Clubbing 40+: 20

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

Ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
With cough/fatigue/chest pain/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19
With unexplained lymphadenopathy: 5
With unexplained splenomegaly: 5

UROLOGICAL

UROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

Unexplained non-visible haematuria with dysuria 60+: 10
Unexplained non-visible haematuria with Δ wbc 60+: 10
Erectile dysfunction: 29
Haematuria (visible and unexplained) without UTI: 10
Haematuria (visible and unexplained) with persistence/recurrence after treatment for UTI 45+: 10
Haematuria (non visible and unexplained) with dysuria/ Δ blood test wbc 60+: 25**
Haematuria (visible and unexplained) with low Hb/ Δ platelets/ Δ blood glucose 55+: 25**
Haematuria (visible and unexplained) with vaginal discharge 55+: 25**
Haematuria (visible) in men: 29
Testicular enlargement/shape change/texture change (non-painful): 10
Testicular symptoms (unexplained/persistent): 32
UTI (unexplained and recurrent/persistent) 60+: 27
LUTS in males: 29
Urinary urgency (persistent or >12x per month) especially if 50+: 15

ABDOMINAL

ABDOMINAL DISTENSION

(persistent and >12 times per month): 15

ABDOMINAL/PELVIC/RECTAL MASS

Suggestive of ovarian pathology: 5
Abdominal/rectal: 2
Splenomegaly: 5
Upper abdomen (consistent with liver/gall bladder/stomach mass): 21
Hepatosplenomegaly: 22

ABDOMINAL/PELVIC PAIN

50+: 24
With weight loss in 40+: 2
With rectal bleeding in <50: 2
With rectal bleeding in 50+: 24
Upper abdominal pain with weight loss in 55+: 7
Upper abdominal pain with any of: anaemia, Δ platelets, nausea, vomiting in 55+: 30
Abdominal/pelvic pain 12+ times per month in 50+: 30
With weight loss in 60+: 33
IBS symptoms 12+ times per month in 50+: 15

ASCITES +/- OR PELVIC OR ABDOMINAL MASS 3

CHANGE IN BOWEL PATTERN
Unexplained 60+: 2
Unexplained with rectal bleeding <60: 24
Unexplained without rectal bleeding <60: 24
Unexplained in females: 15
With weight loss: 33
IBS symptoms 12+ times per month in 50+: 15

DYSPEPSIA

With weight loss in 55+: 7
Treatment resistant 55+: 30
55+ with Δ platelets/N/V: 7

DYSPHAGIA 3-4

NAUSEA OR VOMITING

With weight loss 60+: 33
With Δ platelets/weight loss/reflux/dyspepsia/upper abdominal pain in 55+: 50

RECTAL EXAMINATION

Prostate feels malignant or mass felt: 10

REFLUX

With weight loss in 55+: 7
With Δ platelets/nausea/vomiting: 50

GYNAECOLOGICAL

GYNAECOLOGICAL

Cervix - cancerous appearance: 3
Vaginal discharge - first presentation/ Δ platelets/haematuria in 55+: 32
Vaginal mass in or at entrance to vagina: 3
Vulval bleeding/lump/ulceration: 3

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ABDOMINAL SYMPTOMS

Hepatosplenomegaly: 26
Abdominal mass or enlarged abdominal organ: 28
Splenomegaly: 28

BLEEDING/BRUISING/RASHES

Petechiae (unexplained): 26
Bruising/bleeding (unexplained): 22

LUMPS/MASSES

Lymphadenopathy (unexplained): 28
Lymphadenopathy (generalised): 22
Lump (unexplained) increasing in size: 36

NEUROLOGICAL

New abnormality of cerebellar or CNS function: 28

NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS

Fatigue (persistent): 22
Fever with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly (unexplained): 28
Fever (unexplained): 22
Infection (unexplained and recurrent): 22
Lymphadenopathy (unexplained): 28
Lymphadenopathy (generalised): 22

Night sweats with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 28

Pruritis with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 28

Weight loss with splenomegaly: 28

Parental concern (persistent): 15

PRIMARY CARE INVESTIGATIONS
USS/CXR suggest sarcoma: 28

Absent red reflex: 28

RESPIRATORY
SOB with lymphadenopathy: 28

SOB with splenomegaly (unexplained): 28

SKELETAL
Bone pain (persistent and unexplained): 22

Bone pain/swelling (unexplained): 37

SKIN/SURFACE
Petechiae: 26

Bruising: 22

Pallor: 22

UROLOGICAL
Haematuria (visible and unexplained): 28