

Pan-London Suspected Head and Neck Cancer Referral Guide

Neck Lump: Urgent concurrent chest X-ray (to be performed within 48 hours) for patients presenting with: palpable neck lump (to exclude lung/haematological cancer/infectious diseases)

Referral criteria

Thyroid cancer

- Unexplained solitary thyroid lump $\geq 1\text{cm}$
- Ultrasound suggestive of thyroid cancer $\geq 1\text{cm}$
- Enlarging goitre

Salivary cancer

- Unexplained or persistent parotid or submandibular swelling
- Firm sub-mucosal swelling in the oral cavity

Laryngeal/ Pharyngeal cancer

- ≥ 4 weeks of persistent, particularly unilateral, discomfort in the throat or throat pain
- ≥ 40 years old with ≥ 3 weeks of at least one of the following: Persistent unexplained hoarseness, Dysphagia, Odynophagia, Otalgia

Ear/ Nose/ Sinus cancer

- Unilateral middle ear effusion at otoscopy
- Persistent unilateral otalgia
- Facial palsy/cranial neuropathy
- Orbital/facial/nasal mass
- Suspicious facial pain

Oral/ Lip cancer

- ≥ 3 weeks unexplained ulceration in the oral cavity
- Suspicious lump/mass on the lip or in the oral cavity
- A red or red and white patch in the oral cavity suggestive of leukoplakia or erythroleukoplakia
- Tooth mobility not associated with periodontal disease
- Poor healing ≥ 3 weeks post tooth extraction

Stridor

This is an emergency and requires same day referral

Risk Factors

Smoking, Oral tobacco use, Alcohol consumption, HPV, HIV, Previous irradiation to head and neck or Family history of thyroid cancer

SUSPECTED HEAD AND NECK CANCER REFERRAL

RESOURCES

1. CRUK & BDA Oral Cancer Recognition Toolkit http://www.doctors.net.uk/eClientopen/CRUK/oral_cancer_toolkit_2015_open/home.html
2. NICE guidelines. Suspected cancer: recognition and referral, NG12 (Feb 2021) <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/head-neck-cancers-recognition-referral/>
3. Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer, CG27 (2005) <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20060715141954/http://nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/cg027niceguideline.pdf>
4. NICE guidelines. Improving outcomes in head and neck cancers, CSG6 (2004) <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/csg6>