

# NICE: SUSPECTED CANCER RECOGNITION AND REFERRAL – SYMPTOM REFERENCE GUIDE

## KEY

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

- 2ww breast
- 2ww CRC
- 2ww gynae
- 2ww head and neck
- 2ww haematology
- 2ww lung
- 2ww Sarcoma
- 2ww skin
- 2ww urology
- 2ww upper GI
- Abdominal and pelvic USS
- Appointment with dentist within 2w
- Assess for other symptoms/ signs then 2ww referral/ further urgent investigation
- Assess for other clinical causes/ monitor in primary care
- CA-125
- Consider Paediatrician referral
- MRI/CT within 2w
- CT/USS within 2w
- CXR within 2w
- Direct access USS within 2w
- OGD within 2w
- Fbc within 48 hours
- Fbc, Ca<sup>2+</sup> + ESR/PV
- FOBT
- Gynae USS
- Immediate referral to Paediatrician
- Non-urgent referral via urology pathway
- Ophthalmologist referral within 2w
- Paediatrician appointment within 48h
- PSA + DRE
- Routine OGD
- Routine referral
- Routine USS
- Urine protein electrophoresis & 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; BJP: Bence-Jones protein urine test; CRC: colorectal cancer; CXR: chest Xray; DRE: Digital rectal examination; DVT: Deep vein thrombosis; ESR/PV: Erythrocyte sedimentation rate or plasma viscosity; Fbc: full blood count; FOBT: Faecal occult blood test; GOR: Gastro-oesophageal reflux; IDA: Iron deficiency anaemia; LUTS: Lower urinary tract symptoms; N/V: nausea/vomiting; OGD: upper GI endoscopy; PSA: Prostate specific antigen; SCC: squamous cell carcinoma; SOB: shortness of breath; USS: ultrasound scan; wbc: white blood cell.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

### ABDOMINAL DISTENSION

Persistent or >12 times per month in women especially 50+: 15

### ABDOMINAL/PELVIC/RECTAL MASS

Suggestive of ovarian pathology: 5  
Abdominal/rectal: 2  
Splenomegaly: 5  
Upper abdomen (consistent with liver/gall bladder): 20  
Upper abdomen (consistent with stomach cancer): 10  
Hepatosplenomegaly: 22

### ABDOMINAL/PELVIC PAIN

Abdominal pain with weight loss in 40+: 2  
Abdominal pain with rectal bleeding in <50: 2  
Abdominal pain without rectal bleeding in 50+: 24  
Upper abdominal pain with weight loss in 55+: 21  
Upper abdominal pain with any of: anaemia, ^platelets, nausea, vomiting in 55+: 31  
Persistent or >12 times per month in women especially 50+: 15  
Abdominal pain with weight loss in 60+: 18  
IBS symptoms within 12 months in women 50+: 15

### ASCITES +/-OR PELVIC OR ABDOMINAL MASS 5

### BLEEDING

Unexplained bruising, bleeding, petechiae: 22  
Haematemesis: 31  
Haemoptysis 40+: 6  
Post-menopausal: 6  
Rectal bleeding with abdominal pain/change in bowel habit/weight loss/IDA <50: 2  
Rectal 50+: 2  
Vulval: 5

### CHANGE IN BOWEL PATTERN

Unexplained 60+: 2  
Unexplained with rectal bleeding <50: 2  
Without rectal bleeding <60: 24  
Unexplained in females: 15  
Diarrhoea/constipation with weight loss 60+: 18  
IBS symptoms within 12 months in women 50+: 15

### DYSPEPSIA

With weight loss in 55+: 21  
Treatment resistant 55+: 31  
55+ with ^platelets/N/V: 31

### DYSPHAGIA 24

### GYNAECOLOGICAL

Cervix – cancerous appearance: 3  
Vaginal discharge – first presentation/^platelets/haematuria in 55+: 35  
Vaginal mass (unexplained and palpable) in or at entrance to vagina: 5  
Vulval bleeding/lump/ulceration: 5

### LUMPS/MASSES

Anal: 2  
Axillary 30+: 1  
Breast 30+: 1  
Breast <30: 32

Lip/oral cavity: 12\*  
Lump increasing in size: 20  
Neck (unexplained) 45+: 4  
Neck (persistent and unexplained): 4  
Penile (STI excluded): 9  
Thyroid: 4  
Vaginal/vulval (unexplained): 5

### LYMPHADENOPATHY

Unexplained in adults: 5  
Supraclavicular/ persistent cervical 40+: 10  
Generalised in adults: 22

### NAUSEA OR VOMITING

With weight loss 60+: 15  
With ^platelets/weight loss/reflux/dyspepsia/upper abdominal pain in 55+: 31

### NEUROLOGICAL (ADULTS)

Loss of central neurological function (progressive): 17

### ORAL LESIONS

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

### PAIN

Alcohol induced lymph node pain with lymphadenopathy: 5  
Back with weight loss 60+: 18  
Back (persistent) 60+: 25  
Chest (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 15  
Chest (unexplained) with cough/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 15

### RECTAL EXAMINATION

Prostate feels malignant: 9

### REFLUX

With weight loss in 55+: 21  
With ^platelets/nausea/vomiting in 55+: 31

### RESPIRATORY

Chest infection (persistent or recurrent) 40+: 18  
Chest pain (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 15  
Chest pain (unexplained) with cough/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 15  
Cough (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 15  
Cough (unexplained) with chest pain/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 15  
Hoarseness (unexplained and persistent) 45+: 4  
Chest signs consistent with cancer/pleural disease 40+: 15  
Finger clubbing 40+: 18

### SHORTNESS OF BREATH

Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 15  
With cough/fatigue/chest pain/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 15  
With unexplained lymphadenopathy: 5  
With unexplained splenomegaly: 5

### SKELETAL SYMPTOMS

Back pain with weight loss 60+: 18  
Back pain (persistent) 60+: 25  
Bone pain (persistent) 60+: 25  
Fracture (unexplained) 60+: 32

### SKIN OR SURFACE SYMPTOMS

Anal ulceration: 2  
Bruising: 22

Nipple: unilateral changes (including those "of concern") 50+: 1  
Penile lesion/mass (STI excluded): 9  
Penile symptoms affecting the foreskin or glans: 9  
Petechiae (unexplained): 22  
Skin change suggesting breast cancer: 1  
Pigmented lesion with a weighted 7 point score 3+: 8  
Lesion suggestive of nodular melanoma: 8  
Lesion suggestive of SCC: 8  
Lesion suggestive of BCC: 32  
Lesion suggestive of BCC & concern that treatment delay may have a significant impact: 8  
Vulval lump/ulceration (unexplained): 5

### UROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

Erectile dysfunction: 10  
Haematuria (non visible and unexplained) with dysuria/^blood test wbc 60+: 9  
Haematuria (visible and unexplained) without UTI 45+: 9  
Haematuria (visible and unexplained) with persistence/recurrence after treatment for UTI 45+: 9  
Haematuria (visible) with low Hb/^plt/^blood glucose/ unexplained vaginal discharge 55+: 25\*\*  
Haematuria (visible) in men: 30  
Testicular enlargement/shape change/texture change (non-painful): 9  
Testicular symptoms (unexplained/persistent): 35  
UTI (unexplained and recurrent/persistent) 60+: 27  
LUTS in males: 30  
Urinary urgency (persistent or >12x per month) in women especially if 50+: 15

## NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS RECOMMENDED PATHWAYS

### APPETITE LOSS

Unexplained: consider: lung, upper GI, CRC, pancreatic, urological: 15  
Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 15  
With cough/fatigue/SOB/chest pain/weight loss 40+: 15  
Or early satiety persistent/>12x per month in women especially 50+: 15

### DVT:

consider urogenital/breast/CRC/lung cancers: 15

### DIABETES

New onset with weight loss 60+: 18

### FATIGUE

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

### FEVER

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

### FINGER CLUBBING 40+: 18

### INFECTION

Unexplained and persistent/recurrent 16+: 22

### NIGHT SWEATS

With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5

### PALLOR: 22

### PRURITUS:

With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5

### WEIGHT LOSS

Unexplained: consider: lung, upper GI, CRC, pancreatic, urological: 15  
Unexplained with abdominal pain 40+: 2  
Unexplained with rectal bleeding <50: 2  
Unexplained without rectal bleeding 50+: 24  
Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 15  
With cough/fatigue/SOB/chest pain/appetite loss 40+ never smoked: 15  
With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5  
With upper abdominal pain/GOR/dyspepsia 55+: 24  
Unexplained in women: 15  
With diarrhoea/nausea/vomiting/constipation 60+: 18  
With back pain/abdominal pain/new onset diabetes 60+: 18  
With ^platelets/nausea/vomiting 55+: 31

## INVESTIGATION FINDINGS RECOMMENDED PATHWAYS

### ANAEMIA (IDA)

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

### ANAEMIA (NORMOCYTIC)

Without rectal bleeding 60+: 24  
Visible haematuria women 55+: 25  
Upper abdominal pain 55+: 31

### BJP SUGGESTS MYELOMA: 5

### ^BLOOD GLUCOSE WITH VISIBLE HAEMATURIA IN WOMEN 55+: 25

### CA-125 35+IU/ML: 11

### CA-125 <35IU/ML OR >35IU/ML WITH NORMAL ULTRASOUND: 14

### ^CA<sup>2+</sup>/LOW WBC AND CONSISTENT WITH MYELOMA 60+: 34

### CXR SUGGESTS LUNG CANCER/ MESOTHELIOMA: 6

### DERMOSCOPY SUGGESTS MELANOMA: 8

### NEW ONSET DIABETES WITH WEIGHT LOSS 60+: 18

### DRE SUGGESTS PROSTATE CANCER: 9

### ^ESR/PV AND CONSISTENT WITH MYELOMA: 34

### FOBT + ve: 2

### JAUNDICE 40+: 10

### ^PLATELETS WITH GOR/DYSPEPSIA/UPPER ABDOMINAL PAIN 55+: 31

### ^PLATELETS WITH NAUSEA/VOMITING/ WEIGHT LOSS 55+: 31

### ^PLATELETS 40+: 15

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

### PSA ABOVE AGE SPECIFIC RANGE: 9

### URINE PROTEIN ELECTROPHORESIS SUGGESTS MYELOMA: 5

### USS SUGGESTS OVARIAN CANCER: 5

### USS SUGGESTS SOFT TISSUE SARCOMA: 7

### XRAY SUGGESTS BONE SARCOMA: 7

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

### ABDOMINAL SYMPTOMS

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

### BLEEDING/BRUISING/RASHES

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

### LUMPS/MASSES

Lymphadenopathy (unexplained): 26  
Lymphadenopathy (generalised): 22  
Lump (unexplained) increasing in size: 35

### NEUROLOGICAL

New abnormality of cerebellar or CNS function: 26

### NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS

Fatigue (persistent): 22  
Fever with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly (unexplained): 26  
Fever (unexplained): 22  
Infection (unexplained and persistent): 22  
Night sweats with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 26  
Pruritus with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 26

Weight loss with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 25  
Parental concern (persistent): 16

### PRIMARY CARE INVESTIGATIONS

USS/CXR suggest sarcoma: 25  
Absent red reflex: 28

### RESPIRATORY

SOB with lymphadenopathy: 29  
SOB with splenomegaly (unexplained): 29

### SKELETAL

Bone pain (persistent or unexplained): 22  
Bone pain/swelling (unexplained): 36

### SKIN/SURFACE

Bruising (unexplained): 22  
Pallor: 22

### UROLOGICAL

Haematuria (visible and unexplained): 29