

NCCP advice for Medical Professionals on the management of patients referred to the Rapid Access Lung Cancer Clinics in response to the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

This document relates to patients who do not have COVID-19 or are not suspected of having COVID-19.

Current events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are challenging and all public health bodies are placing the safety of patients, staff and communities first in all decisions.

This is an evolving situation. This advice is based on current information, it is additional to the advice of the NPHET, the HSE and the DoH, and will be updated as necessary.

The NCCP acknowledges that each hospital is working under individual constraints, including staff and infrastructure, and as a result will implement this advice based on their own unique circumstances.

The purpose of this advice is to maximise the safety of patients and make the best use of HSE resources, while protecting staff from infection. It will also enable services to match the capacity for cancer care to patient needs if services become limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Any clinician seeking to apply or consult these documents is expected to use independent medical judgement in the context of individual clinical circumstances to determine any patient's care or treatment.

1 NPHET, HSE and DoH advice

Hospitals will operate under the overarching advice of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET), the HSE and the DoH. Information is available at:

- HSE HPSC - <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/>
- HSE Coronavirus (COVID-19) - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>
- DoH Coronavirus (COVID-19) - <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>
- Ireland's National Action Plan in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

2 Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice for medical professionals on the management of patients referred to the Rapid Access Lung Cancer Clinics in response to the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

3 Patients referred to Rapid Access Lung Cancer Clinics

All referrals to the Rapid Access Lung Cancer Clinic will be accepted.

4 Triage

All patients shall be triaged into two categories:

- Patients with a high suspicion of lung cancer, or
- Patients who do not have a high suspicion of lung cancer.

5 Patients triaged as having a high suspicion of lung cancer

In patients triaged as having a high suspicion of lung cancer a CT scan should be performed.

The CT should be reviewed by the Respiratory Physician/MDT to determine which of the following actions is required:

- Patients should be offered an appointment at the RALC or a telephone appointment
- Patient should go directly to procedure bronchoscopy, or other diagnostic procedure
- No appointment is necessary.

6 Patients triaged as not having a high suspicion of lung cancer

- The patient is offered an appointment at a general respiratory clinic (not the RALC) or
- The patient is discharged to their GP with a letter of explanation.

7 Staff and capacity

Clinic staff should be left in place to support the running of the service.

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