

“Adapted from the Oxfordshire University Hospitals
SCAN pathway booklet”

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand rub (special gel) available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand rub. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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Vague Symptoms Pathway (VSP)

**A rapid diagnostic pathway for
patients with non-specific
symptoms**

Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call PALS on 01296 316042

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Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Useful telephone numbers:

Wycombe Hospital

01494 526161 (Switchboard)

Navigator Office

07818578183

If you are asked to attend any appointment at the hospital we are happy for you to bring someone with you. This is often helpful when new information is being discussed and also if further tests need arranging

If you have not received an appointment within 7 days of your GP referral or if you need to change the planned phone call date/time then please call the Navigator Office on 07818578183 as soon as possible

Follow-up

Your follow-up care will be decided by the Hospital VSP team based on your clinical information and test results.

You may require more tests if further information is needed, or a referral to a specialist who will assess you in person. This could be a cancer referral or a referral for another medical condition if this is more likely.

If the results from the CT scan and other tests do not indicate that further hospital tests or treatment are needed, the VSP team will write to your GP.

Patient experience feedback of the VSP

We may ask you to complete a questionnaire about your experiences of the Vague Symptoms Pathway to help with planning of future services for patients.

Introduction

Your GP has invited you to be investigated by the Vague Symptoms (VSP) pathway. This leaflet is designed to help you to understand why the pathway is in place and what it will involve.

VSP is part of a new national programme to find the quickest, most efficient way to reach a diagnosis in patients who have non-specific symptoms.

This leaflet is designed to tell you more about the purpose of the VSP pathway, and, what will happen **over the next 2 weeks** when you get referred by your GP. For a rapid diagnosis it is important that you make yourself available for all appointments.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Should you require any further information, please speak to your GP.

Contact details for the Hospital team are displayed on the back page of this booklet.



What is the purpose of the VSP Pathway?

Many patients visit their GP with vague or general symptoms such as weight loss and tiredness. These symptoms are called “non-specific”, as they affect the whole person. Often the cause of these symptoms remains unclear after your GP has assessed you. These ‘non-specific’ symptoms may sometimes be caused by a serious disease, such as cancer but the risk of this is very low.

Your GP has assessed you to have one or more of the “non-specific” symptoms for which VSP has been developed.

There could be a number of reasons for these symptoms and although the risk of serious disease is low, there are some patients for whom, early tests could help make a diagnosis quicker and treatment started sooner.

This pathway is designed to give GPs a quick and efficient way to access this full group of tests for patients with “non-specific” symptoms.

Patients of the Buckinghamshire NHS Trust who are referred can expect rapid diagnostic scans, (Computed Tomography or CT), blood and poo tests. Then, if required, an early appointment with a specialist depending on test results.

SUMMARY OF VAGUE SYMPTOMS PATHWAY (VSP)

When you see your GP	Your GP will:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a referral to the Vague Symptoms pathway• Give you this information leaflet• Give you a poo sample pack to be returned to either the practice or the hospital• Arrange for you to have some blood tests
Your first appointment at the Hospital	You will:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be given the opportunity to ask any questions• Hand in your poo sample if not already handed in at your GP practice• Have a CT scan
Further appointments	The next appointment will most likely be one of the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further tests if required to make a diagnosis, or• A specialist clinic at one of the Hospital sites with a Consultant or one of the VSP team, or• An appointment with your GP

Before your scan starts

Please inform a member of staff immediately before the start of your scan if you are allergic to anything.

You will be given an injection with a type of dye (*known as contrast*) into a vein in your arm during the scan. This will help us see the blood supply to the area we are scanning.

On very rare occasions some patients may experience a reaction to the dye, which may include symptoms such as itching or a rash, nausea, headache or dizziness.

For this reason you will be asked to remain in the department being monitored for 20 minutes following the contrast injection.

What will I have to do when on this pathway?

When you and your GP decide to refer using the VSP pathway, your GP will give you this information leaflet and a poo collection pack for you to collect a sample. You will also be asked to attend for some blood tests.

Your GP will send the Hospital team detailed information about your clinical problem - your symptoms, examination findings, medical history, and any recent test results. You will be asked to attend an appointment for tests:-

within 2 weeks of referral by your GP

Please ensure you can be available for this appointment which will be in the X-Ray department at Wycombe Hospital

At this appointment you will :-

1. Meet with the Clinical Navigator, who is a Radiographer, and they will talk you through the process.
2. Be asked to hand in your poo specimen if you have not handed it in already to your GP practice
3. Have a whole body CT scan

Following your first appointment, the clinical information received from your GP and all of your test results will be reviewed by the VSP team

The next step will be **One** of the following:

- Refer you to a Hospital Specialist or VSP clinic or
- Arrange any further tests needed which will be within 2 weeks or
- Refer you back to your GP with advice

For the CT scan

Please do not eat anything for 3 hours before your appointment. If you have a medical condition where your doctor has told you not to go without food for several hours, please contact your Navigator to discuss this. You will need to drink a large quantity of water or squash over a relatively short period of time. This enables us to visualise your bowel on the CT scan.

Drinking Instructions

1. Please drink 1 litre of water or squash 2 hours prior to your examination time
2. You will be asked to drink a further 2 cups of water whilst meeting your Clinical Navigator
3. You are free to empty your bladder as needed

A CT scan is carried out by using a special X-Ray machine, which produces pictures of a cross-section or slice of the body. The scanner is of open design, not a tunnel.

To view a video about having a CT scan visit www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/radiology