

Dear GP

Cancer Research UK Facilitator Support in Covid-19

The challenges posed by Covid-19 have impacted across the cancer pathway from first presentation in primary care up to the treatments offered. In the coming weeks the CRUK Facilitator Programme will be offering a reduced service until further notice as some of our colleagues are currently furloughed. However, CRUK remains committed to supporting Primary Care to ensure that patients with worrying symptoms continue to be investigated under appropriate Cancer pathways.

Fewer people are presenting to their GPs with symptoms and this is impacting the whole cancer pathway. There has been a significant drop in numbers of 'urgent referrals' for cancer, overall the numbers of urgent referrals have dropped to around 25% of usual levels in England. This will have an impact on how many cancers are diagnosed at the earliest possible stage.

FOR YOUR PATIENTS: CRUK has updated its online cancer information for patients to include issues relating to Covid-19. It's a good resource to use if you are communicating with your patients, perhaps through new communication routes and online consultations, to stress the importance of spotting early signs and symptoms of cancer and attending the practice.

- This link guides patients through having cancer symptoms during the coronavirus outbreak, and includes a great video from a GP about how important it is to contact your GP:
<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/coronavirus/cancer-symptoms>
- This link outlines key early signs and symptoms of cancer for patients:
<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-symptoms>

In addition, the CRUK Cancer Helpline is always available to help your patients with queries and concerns. They can talk to the Cancer Research UK nurses on freephone 0808 800 4040, from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

FOR YOUR PRACTICE

SAFETY NETTING: The accompanying leaflet "Safety netting patients during the COVID-19 pandemic" offers guidance from CRUK to help GPs deliver best-practice Safety Netting of suspected cancer patients during Covid-19. These tips and guidance should be used in conjunction with your local referral pathways to ensure that, alongside your secondary care colleagues, patients are monitored throughout their path to diagnosis.

REMOTE TRAINING AND SUPPORT: CRUK Facilitators can offer your practice or PCN a range of tailored, on-line sessions. We can adapt sessions in line with the numbers of staff and time available and can use them to deliver bite-size training or more in depth discussions of practice needs, all via the practice's preferred communication channels (eg Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business, Zoom, Whatsapp etc). Get in touch to discuss how best we can help you.

As I'm sure you are, we are looking ahead to cancer diagnosis and care after the virus peak. As screening activities pick up and patients re-engage with primary care, we are here to help you. Please do contact the Facilitator team if you would like to consider how we can support you further to mitigate the impact of this pandemic on the early stage of the cancer pathway for your patients.

Best wishes

Jon

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