

Dermatology Photo Triage Referral Pathway

What is the Dermatology Photo Triage Referral Pathway?

Often GPs diagnose and treat many skin problems themselves. However, on occasion they may wish to refer your skin problem to a skin specialist (consultant) for their opinion. The Dermatology Photo Triage referral pathway uses technology to obtain a rapid diagnosis and treatment plan from a consultant for your skin problem without you having to attend a hospital. The consultant's assessment will come back to your GP.

The pathway involves using a camera on a smart device to take high quality pictures of your skin irregularity or mole at your initial appointment with your GP. You will be asked to give your consent for the photographs to be taken.

These photographs are then sent electronically to a skin specialist (Dermatology Consultant) at a hospital, with appropriate further information.



If your condition is suspected to be a possible cancer, your GP will advise you of this at your appointment. Following your assessment, the GP will send your photographs, together with your clinical information to a Dermatology Consultant in the hospital.

What happens next in the Photo Triage Pathway with the Consultant Dermatologist?

The Dermatology Consultant will review both the information provided by your GP and the photographs to assess your skin condition and decide what action needs to be taken next.

The possible recommendations will include:

- **No hospital appointment is required**

The mole / irregularity on your skin has been assessed and is judged to be benign (harmless) which does not require any further treatment or assessment at the hospital. As you are not required to attend the hospital your GP will continue to manage your skin problem using the advice received from the consultant and can seek further advice if it is needed.

- **You will receive an appointment to attend the hospital to have the skin condition looked at**

The consultant in the hospital would like to see you for a face to face appointment. This will enable the consultant to examine your skin in more detail.

- **You will receive an appointment to have the skin condition biopsied or removed at the hospital**

The consultant in the hospital would like to see you for a face to face assessment. A sample (biopsy) may be taken or removal of the skin irregularity can be done to determine the diagnosis. This does not necessarily mean that the condition is malignant but that further analysis is required to ensure the correct treatment can be given.

- **You will be referred to a specialist in another area of medicine to assess further or treat the mole or skin irregularity**

Depending on the size or location of the irregularity, a specialist in plastic surgery will need to assess the mole/ lesion.

Phone numbers used by Hospitals Clinics

If you are required to attend the hospital you will receive a call from what may be displayed as an unknown or withheld number. Please answer these calls if you have received them within a few days of your appointment with your GP – **it may be a call offering you an appointment**. Following your appointment at the hospital a letter detailing the results from your appointment will be sent to both you and your GP.

Interpreting Service

You can obtain the service of an interpreter or have this document translated in your own language by contacting the interpreting services on **028 9536 3777**. These services are available free of charge.

If you need more information please contact us at phototriageNI@hscni.net

Protect your skin



Seek the advice of your GP if you notice any mole changes, new moles or abnormal skin changes