

NICE: SUSPECTED CANCER RECOGNITION AND REFERRAL SYMPTOM REFERENCE GUIDE

KEY

- No time specified
- 2WW
- Routine
- Within 2 weeks
- Within 48h
- 1 2ww breast
- 2 2ww CRC
- 3 2ww gynae
- 4 2ww head and neck
- 5 2ww haematology
- 6 2ww lung
- 7 2ww Sarcoma
- 8 2ww skin
- 9 2ww urology
- 10 2ww Upper GI
- 11 Abdominal and pelvic USS
- 12 Appointment with dentist within 2w
- 13 Assess for other symptoms/ signs then 2ww referral/ further urgent investigation
- 14 Assess for other clinical causes/ monitor in primary care
- 15 CA-125
- 16 Consider Paediatrician referral
- 17 MRI/CT within 2w
- 18 CT/USS within 2w
- 19 CXR within 2w
- 20 Direct access USS within 2w
- 21 OGD within 2w
- 22 Fbc within 48 hours
- 23 Fbc, Ca²⁺ + ESR/PV
- 24 FOBT
- 25 Gynae USS
- 26 Immediate referral to Paediatrician
- 27 Non-urgent referral via urology pathway
- 28 Ophthalmologist referral within 2w
- 29 Paediatrician appointment within 48h
- 30 PSA + DRE
- 31 Routine OGD
- 32 Routine referral
- 33 Routine USS
- 34 Urine protein electrophoresis and BJP within 48h
- 35 USS within 48h
- 36 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.

NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS

APPETITE LOSS

Unexplained: consider: lung, upper GI, CRC, pancreatic, urological: 15
 Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 19
 With cough/fatigue/SOB/chest pain/weight loss 40+: 19
 Or early satiety persistent >12x per month in women especially in 50+: 15

DVT:
 consider urogenital/breast/CRC/lung cancers: 15

DIABETES
 New onset with weight loss 60+: 18

FATIGUE
 Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 19
 With cough/SOB/chest pain/weight loss/appetite loss (unexplained) 40+: 19
 Persistent 16+: 22
 Unexplained in women: 15

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

FINGER CLUBBING 40+: 19
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+: 19
 With cough/fatigue/SOB/chest pain/appetite loss 40+ never smoked: 19
 With unexplained splenomegaly/lymphadenopathy 16+: 5
 With upper abdominal pain/GOR/dyspepsia 55+: 21
 Unexplained in women: 15
 With diarrhoea/nausea/vomiting/constipation 60+: 18
 With back pain/abdominal pain/new onset diabetes 60+: 18
 With \uparrow platelets/nausea/vomiting 55+: 31

BLEEDING

BLEEDING
 Unexplained bruising, bleeding, petechiae: 22
 Haematemesis: 31
 Haemoptysis 40+: 6
 Post-menopausal: 3
 Rectal bleeding with abdominal pain/change in bowel habit/weight loss/IDA <50: 2
 Rectal 50+: 2
 Vulval: 3

LUMPS/MASSES

LUMPS/MASSES
 Anal: 2
 Axillary 30+: 1
 Breast 30+: 1
 Breast <30: 62
 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): 3

LYMPHADENOPATHY
 Unexplained in adults: 5
 Supraclavicular/persistent cervical 40+: 19
 Generalised in adults: 22

PAIN

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: 19
 Chest (unexplained) with cough/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19

SKIN

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/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): 3

SKELETAL

SKELETAL SYMPTOMS
 Back pain with weight loss 60+: 18
 Back pain (persistent) 60+: 25
 Bone pain (persistent) 60+: 23
 Fracture (unexplained) 60+: 23

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

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

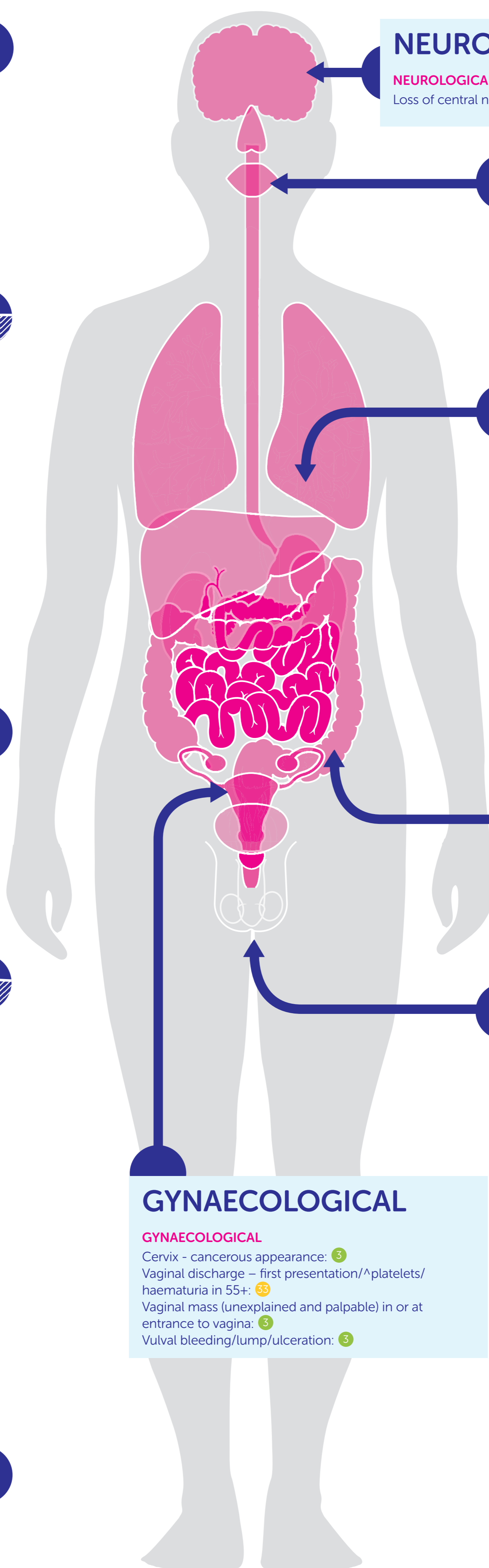
BJP SUGGESTS MYELOMA: 5

\uparrow 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

\uparrow CA²⁺/LOW WBC AND CONSISTENT WITH MYELOMA 60+: 34



NEUROLOGICAL

NEUROLOGICAL
 Loss of central neurological function (progressive): 17

ORAL LESIONS

ORAL LESIONS
 Ulceration (unexplained, >3w): 4
 Oral red / red & white patches: 12*

RESPIRATORY

RESPIRATORY
 Chest infection (persistent or recurrent) 40+: 19
 Chest pain (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
 Chest pain (unexplained) with cough/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19
 Cough (unexplained) 40+ ever smoked/asbestos exposed: 19
 Cough (unexplained) with chest pain/fatigue/SOB/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19
 Hoarseness (unexplained and persistent) 45+: 4
 Chest signs consistent with cancer/pleural disease 40+: 19
 Finger clubbing 40+: 19

SHORTNESS OF BREATH
 Ever smoked/asbestos exposed 40+: 19
 With cough/fatigue/chest pain/weight loss/appetite loss 40+: 19
 With unexplained lymphadenopathy: 5
 With unexplained splenomegaly: 5

UROLOGICAL

UROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS
 Erectile dysfunction: 30
 Haematuria (visible and unexplained) without UTI 45+: 9
 Haematuria (visible and unexplained) with persistence/recurrence after treatment for UTI 45+: 9
 Haematuria (non visible and unexplained) with dysuria/ \uparrow blood test wbc 60+: 9
 Haematuria (visible) with low Hb/ \uparrow platelets / \uparrow blood glucose / unexplained vaginal discharge in women 55+: 25**
 Haematuria (visible) in men: 30
 Testicular enlargement/shape change/texture change (non-painful): 9
 Testicular symptoms (unexplained/persistent): 33
 UTI (unexplained and recurrent/persistent) 60+: 27
 LUTS in males: 30
 Urinary urgency (persistent or >12x per month) in women especially 50+: 15

ABDOMINAL

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, \uparrow 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 3

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 \uparrow platelets/N/V: 31

DYSPHAGIA 21

NAUSEA OR VOMITING
 With weight loss 60+: 18
 With \uparrow platelets/weight loss/reflux/dyspepsia/upper abdominal pain in 55+: 31

RECTAL EXAMINATION
 Prostate feels malignant: 9

REFLUX
 With weight loss in 55+: 21
 With \uparrow platelets/nausea/vomiting 55+: 31

GYNAECOLOGICAL

GYNAECOLOGICAL
 Cervix - cancerous appearance: 3
 Vaginal discharge - first presentation/ \uparrow platelets/haematuria in 55+: 33
 Vaginal mass (unexplained and palpable) in or at entrance to vagina: 3
 Vulval bleeding/lump/ulceration: 3

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ABDOMINAL SYMPTOMS
 Hepatosplenomegaly: 26
 Abdominal mass or enlarged abdominal organ: 29
 Splenomegaly: 29

BLEEDING/BRUISING/RASHES
 Petechiae: (unexplained): 26
 Bruising/bleeding (unexplained): 22

LUMPS/MASSES
 Lymphadenopathy (unexplained): 29
 Lymphadenopathy (generalised): 22
 Lump (unexplained) increasing in size: 35

NEUROLOGICAL
 New abnormality of cerebellar or CNS function: 29

NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS
 Fatigue (persistent): 22
 Fever with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly (unexplained): 29
 Fever (unexplained): 22
 Infection (unexplained and persistent): 22
 Night sweats with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 29

Pruritus with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 29
 Weight loss with lymphadenopathy/splenomegaly: 29
 Parental concern (persistent): 16

PRIMARY CARE INVESTIGATIONS
 USS/CXR suggest sarcoma: 29
 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