

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

Scope for guideline update (starting 2025)

Suspected cancer: recognition and referral: update

NICE is updating its guideline on [suspected cancer: recognition and referral](#) (NG12).

The update will be developed using the methods and processes in [developing NICE guidelines: the manual](#).

Who the guideline update covers

The current guideline covers children, young people and adults with symptoms that could be caused by cancer. The guideline currently includes the terms 'men' and 'women' in some recommendations on gender-related cancers, but they also apply to people who have changed or are in the process of changing gender, and who retain the relevant organs.

The update will focus on:

- ovarian cancer and the signs and symptoms that should prompt a referral via a suspected cancer pathway
- endometrial cancer, hormone replacement therapy and unexplained post-menopausal vaginal bleeding, and referral via a suspected cancer pathway.
- non-site-specific unexplained weight loss in adults and referral via a suspected cancer pathway
- prostate cancer, PSA levels, age, and referral via a suspected cancer pathway

Equality considerations

A new [equality and health inequalities assessment](#) has been completed.

Settings

The update will cover the same settings as the current guideline. This setting is primary care.

Activities, services or aspects of care covered by the guideline update

We will look at the evidence and key external guidance and consider making new recommendations or updating existing recommendations on:

- ovarian cancer and the signs and symptoms that should prompt a referral via a suspected cancer pathway
- endometrial cancer, hormone replacement therapy and unexplained bleeding, and referral via a suspected cancer pathway
- non-site-specific unexplained weight loss in adults and referral via a suspected cancer pathway
- prostate cancer, PSA levels, age, and referral via a suspected cancer pathway

For all other areas of the guideline:

- There will be no evidence review.
- We will retain the existing recommendations from the current guideline, but we may revise them to update the language, reflect current policy or practice, and to ensure consistency.

Draft review questions

We have identified the following draft review questions.

Ovarian cancer

1. What is the diagnostic accuracy of dual testing with serum CA125 and ultrasound scan for the detection of suspected ovarian cancer compared

to serum CA125 alone in adults for referral via a suspected cancer pathway?

2. What is the diagnostic accuracy of different age thresholds and different serum CA125 thresholds for the detection of suspected ovarian cancer in adults for referral via a suspected cancer pathway?

Non-site-specific symptoms: weight loss

3. At what age thresholds should non-site-specific symptoms relating to unexplained weight loss be used to refer adults via a suspected cancer pathway?

Endometrial cancer and hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

4. What is the diagnostic accuracy of unscheduled bleeding in adults taking HRT for referral via a suspected cancer pathway?

Prostate cancer

5. What is the diagnostic accuracy of different age thresholds and different PSA thresholds for the detection of suspected prostate cancer for referral via a suspected cancer pathway?

Economic aspects

We will take economic aspects into account when making recommendations.

NICE guidance and quality standards that may be affected by this guideline update

- [Ovarian cancer: recognition and initial management](#) (2023) NICE Clinical guideline CG122
- [Menopause: identification and management \(2024\)](#) NICE guideline NG23
- [Ovarian cancer \(2025\)](#) NICE Quality standard QS18
- [Suspected cancer \(2017\)](#) NICE Quality standard QS124

Further information

NICE guidelines cover health and care in England. Decisions on how they apply in other UK countries are made by ministers in the [Welsh Government](#), [Scottish Government](#) and [Northern Ireland Executive](#).

The guideline update is expected to be published in April 2026.

To follow the progress of the update, see the [guideline in development page](#).

Our website has information about [how NICE guidelines are developed](#).

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