



CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A REFERRAL LETTER

Referral of patients from primary dental care to secondary care is a crucial part of the management of the oral cancer patient. Appropriate and timely referrals are fundamental to early diagnosis and intervention and thus to saving lives.

A competent letter with the enclosure of previous records, radiographs and/or photographs will assist in expediting the diagnostic process leading to a more favourable outcome for the patient.

The following checklist can be used in composing an accurate and specific referral letter:-

1. Date of referral
2. GDP details including name, address of practice, telephone and fax numbers
3. Patient's details including name, address and date of birth
4. Reason for referral with a request for advice and/or treatment
5. Specific details of the presenting clinical problem
6. Medical history and medication
7. Dental history
8. Appropriate family and social history
9. An indication of the urgency of the referral *
10. Radiographs, photographs, and other supporting documentation
11. Printed name and signature of the referring GDP
12. Legible and clarity of hand writing.

* Specialist units and referral departments usually use fast-track referral forms for urgent referrals. It is suggested that a dental practice should retain these forms for the purpose of an urgent referral. In such a case, a form should be completed and faxed over following a verbal referral to the appropriate department.