

ORL, HNS

National Access Criteria for First Assessment [ACA]

Category Definitions : These are recommended guidelines for HNS specialists prioritizing referrals from primary care.

1. Immediate - *phone call*
2. Urgent - *within 2 weeks*
3. Semi-urgent - *within 8 weeks*
4. Routine - *within 26 weeks*

Immediate and Urgent cases must be discussed with the Specialist or Registrar in order to get appropriate prioritisation and then a referral letter sent with the patient, faxed or e-mailed. The times to assessment may vary depending on size and staffing of the hospital department.

Note: Access criteria that determine prioritisation primarily on the referral diagnosis have their limitations and this is acknowledged. For those referrals in which the referring doctor has not been able to make a confident diagnosis it may be difficult, or impossible, to apply these ACA criteria. It is therefore stressed that these are guidelines only and that clinical judgement must be applied in all cases in which they are used.

NATIONAL REFERRAL GUIDELINES : ORL, HNS

Category	Criteria
1. Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of immediate treatment would result in significant morbidity
2. Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major functional impairment • Suspected malignancy • Uncontrolled pain and/or infection • Trauma not requiring immediate attention • Moderate risk of permanent damage to tissues or systems
3. Semi - Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate functional impairment • Marked restriction of social or economic activity • Conditions causing recurrent infective episodes • Controlled pain • Conditions where there is a slight risk of permanent damage if treatment is delayed
4. Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal functional impairment • Social impairment but minimal restriction of social and/or economic activity • Cosmetic or acquired aesthetic disability of a minimal nature