

MSCC alert card

You have been given this card because you have cancer and are at risk of developing malignant spinal cord compression (MSCC).

You should contact your hospital team immediately if you develop any of these symptoms:

- Back or neck pain that becomes severe.
 - Pain that feels like a band around the chest or tummy (abdomen).
 - Pain that spreads into your lower back, buttocks or legs.
- Pain in the spine that gets worse when you move, lift something heavy, cough or sneeze.
 - Any pain mentioned above that keeps you awake at night.
 - Numbness, a burning feeling or pins and needles in the toes, fingers or over the buttocks.
- Feeling unsteady on your feet, having difficulty walking, weakness or your legs giving way.
 - Problems controlling your bladder (incontinence) or passing little or no urine.
 - Problems controlling your bowels (incontinence) or increasing constipation.



Do not wait for further symptoms to develop.

The earlier treatment starts, the more likely it is to be effective.

**Hospital contact
telephone number:**

If you develop any of these symptoms, get medical advice immediately.

Contact someone straight away, even if it is the weekend or a holiday.

You should contact the hospital team where you usually go for cancer treatment and follow-up appointments.

If you are unable to get in touch with anyone, go to the nearest Emergency Department (A&E) or contact your GP.

When you speak to a health professional:

- describe your symptoms
- tell them you have cancer and are worried you may have spinal cord compression
- tell them that you need to be seen straight away
- show them this card.

Information for doctors or health professionals:

- this patient is at risk of MSCC
- they should be nursed as an unstable spinal patient
- if you suspect MSCC, please arrange an urgent whole spine MRI (or CT if an MRI is contraindicated)
- contact your local acute oncology service or MSCC co-ordinator for advice.

Early diagnosis and treatment are essential.



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