



WA Specialist Referral Access Criteria

FAQs for Patients

What are Specialist Referral Access Criteria?

- Specialist Referral Access Criteria (RAC) are a set of requirements used by GPs and other referrers to guide new referrals into public outpatient services in WA.
- The RAC exist to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of WA public outpatient services.
- Each specialist public outpatient service will have a set of unique RAC. These are designed to assist in providing clarity for GPs regarding referrals into public outpatient services.
- Some speciality RAC may have mandatory requirements such as a particular test result being included in the referral. Having your GP organise this test before you are seen in the hospital will assist the hospital specialist to triage your referral and will streamline your hospital-based care.
- The RAC provide indicative wait times for conditions to assist you and your GP in planning any care that could commence in the community or prior to your appointment. We encourage you to ask your GP about wait times at the time of referral.

Who develops the Specialist Referral Access Criteria?

- The Department of Health has worked closely with a number of key clinical groups across the health sector to develop the RAC for each speciality.
- As providers of the service, subject matter experts such as hospital Heads of Department and Senior Clinicians were involved in developing the RAC for each speciality. Input was also sought from the WA Primary Health Alliance, Hospital Liaison GPs and the Central Referral Service.
- The final Specialist RAC will be published on the [Central Referral Service webpage](#) on the Department of Health website.

What do the indicative triage categories mean?

- The indicative triage categories have been included to provide GPs/referrers with a guide as to how long you may need to wait for an outpatient appointment. This is intended to be a guide only and referrals are triaged according to relative urgency based on:
 - presenting symptoms, probable diagnosis and its potential seriousness
 - how long the symptoms have been present
 - severity and impact of the symptoms in the patient
 - multiple diagnoses.
- We encourage you to keep your GP informed of any change in your condition whilst you are waiting for an outpatient appointment. If your condition changes, your GP will update the referral information or call the hospital to discuss your condition.

What if the condition I am being referred for does not meet the specialist RAC?

- If a GP feels a patient requires specialist review despite not meeting the RAC, they are encouraged to contact their local hospital/speciality clinic to discuss the referral directly.

What happens if urgent review is required?

- If a GP feels their patient requires immediate review (within 7 days) they should contact the appropriate local hospital to discuss the situation directly.
- If a patient requires emergency care they should present to an Emergency Department without delay.

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