

BEFORE YOU OPEN THE RESULT

A short preparation guide for portal notifications and reports that arrive before the conversation

A patient portal can deliver information before a doctor, nurse or specialist is available to explain it.

The notification is not the conversation. A report may contain unfamiliar language, provisional wording or details that need clinical context.

You do not have to open a result in the worst possible moment simply because it has arrived.

BEFORE YOU OPEN IT

Ask yourself:

- Am I somewhere private and safe?
- Do I have time to absorb what I read?
- Is there someone I would like beside me or available by phone?
- Do I know when my clinical follow-up is?
- Do I have the correct number if I need clarification?
- Would waiting until the planned conversation be kinder to me?

There is no right choice for everyone. Some people need to know immediately. Others need support and context first.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO OPEN IT

Read the whole report once before focusing on individual phrases.

Notice what is clearly stated and what is not clear.

Write down unfamiliar terms rather than trying to solve the entire report alone.

Avoid treating one sentence, measurement or highlighted word as the full conclusion.

Do not assume that a report contains the final treatment decision.

WHAT I KNOW FROM THE REPORT

WHAT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLINICAL TEAM

What is the main finding?

Is anything in this report urgent?

How does this compare with the previous result?

Which details matter most for my situation?

Does this change the current plan?

What happens next, and when?

WHO WILL HELP ME INTERPRET IT?

Name or team: _____

Appointment or call date: _____

Contact number: _____

IF THE REPORT LEAVES YOU FRIGHTENED

Step away from repeated searching for a few minutes.

Write down the exact sentence you need explained.

Contact the clinical service using the route they provided.

Tell one trusted person what you need: company, listening, distraction or practical help.

A REMINDER

A result can be important without being understandable on its own. You are not failing because you need a clinician to translate it into meaning.

This resource does not interpret medical reports or replace advice from your clinical team. Follow any urgent instructions included with the result or provided by your healthcare service. Contact your clinical team or urgent services if you have new, severe or concerning symptoms.