**LSUK - Advice to employees with Lynch syndrome about time off for NHS appointments in the UK**

**What is Lynch syndrome?**

Lynch syndrome (LS) is a genetic condition that causes an increase in cancers, often at an early age. The cancers include colon, rectum, uterus, ovary, kidney/ureter/bladder, stomach and small bowel, pancreas, hepatobiliary ducts, prostate, brain, skin and some breast cancers.

These cancers often grow quickly and Lynch syndrome carriers are advised to have regular screening checks such as colonoscopies and act promptly when they have worrying symptoms.

I in 340 of the UK population carries a Lynch syndrome gene mutation.

**Can I take time off if I have cancer?**

Workers who have or have had cancer are entitled to take time off work for appointments and checks. They are covered by ***The Equality Act 2010***. It covers ALL cancers and doesn’t matter if it was a non--Lynch cancer. You are protected by the act from the time you were diagnosed with the cancer. This act used to be an anti-discrimination law and it prevents your employer from discriminating against you by stopping you from going for appointments, treatment or screening after your cancer. It also enables you to ask for reduced or more flexible hours or a change in conditions.

The Cancer Research UK website is a good one to read more about this.

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)/about-cancer/cancers-in-general/cancer-questions/the-disability-discrimination-act-and-cancer

**Can I take time off for screening if I have Lynch syndrome but haven’t had cancer?**

Technically, there is no law to help with this but if you talk to your employer about when you will need time off and what it is for, they will hopefully help you to organise this.

**Lynch Syndrome UK** believes that despite the burden of an increased risk of a number of cancers, most LS carriers do not want to take excessive time off work. We urge all employers to negotiate time off for screening and appointments for everyone with LS *not just those who have had cancer*.

**Many employers do allow carriers of an LS gene mutation to have time off** for screening and hospital appointments with specialists. They regard these as medical appointments that are essential for the good health of their employees rather than them having to be taken as sick leave or annual leave.

**Trade Unions like Unison** say that all employers should have an enlightened approach to giving workers time off for appointments and health screening. Keeping their workforce fit and well will, in the end pay dividends and result in less stress and better productivity.



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