

Patient information: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Please note: as the information we have about COVID-19 is changing rapidly, this information is only valid on the day you receive it. Please keep up to date using the websites listed at the end of this document.

We are aware that some of you might be worried about COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

We are advised by the Government that we should prepare for an increase in the number of people infected with the virus in the UK. We want to reassure you that our department is taking steps to anticipate this situation and safeguard our patients and staff. We will do everything we can to make sure that your treatment and care is not affected. This document is to provide you with some information about how this situation might affect your care and how you can look after yourself.

How to avoid catching or spreading COVID-19 (NHS Choices)

DO

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately
- wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

DON'T

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

We suggest that patients avoid crowded places such as public transport, cinemas, restaurants/cafés/pubs, supermarkets at peak time and large gatherings of people, e.g. football matches etc.

It is fine for you to go outside but try to avoid close (within a metre) contact with other people and for the time being avoid shaking hands.

What are we doing?

Reducing visitors to hospital

Many of the patients who we look after are at greater risk of infection because of a reduced immune system. We want to make every effort to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and ensure the safety of our patients.

For this reason we would like to reduce the number of people coming into the Churchill Hospital unnecessarily.

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- If someone gives you a lift to hospital for an outpatient or day unit appointment, **we ask that they do not come into the hospital**. If this person is important in supporting and caring for you then it is still fine for them to attend for the consultation
- If you are a patient on the ward we ask that you reduce the number of visitors you have

Changes to hospital appointments

In some cases, it will be possible to have a talk with your doctor or specialist nurse over the telephone instead of coming to hospital for an appointment. **We will contact you if there are any changes to your clinic appointments**. You will be given information about collecting your prescription and having blood tests.

Staff

Keeping our staff and patients safe is our number one priority at all times. All of our staff have been given instructions about how to look after themselves. Staff will be following government and hospital guidelines to reduce the risks of spreading the virus to patients.

What should you do?

If you think you are at risk of COVID-19

Do not enter the hospital if:

- you have travelled to an affected area in the last 14 days
(please check website below for an up to date list)

OR

- you have been exposed to another person with the virus

AND

- you have a sore throat, a cough or a temperature.

If this applies to you, call 111 and follow the instructions. There is information about affected countries and areas on the government website listed at the bottom of this document.

If you are having treatment which suppresses your immune system

You should continue to follow the instructions given to you by your doctor and/or specialist nurse.

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If you are feeling unwell, you should call the contact number you have been previously given. These staff will ask you questions about your situation. If there is some reason to suspect that you have the virus, you might be asked to attend a specialist clinic for a test for COVID-19.

What to do when you are in your own home

Minimise the number of visitors and ask friends/family not to visit you if they have coughs and colds. Make sure that people you live with understand that they could potentially pass on COVID-19 even if they feel perfectly well.

At the moment we do not feel that people you live with should avoid public places so they should continue working, attending school etc. but when they are out it will be sensible if they can reduce their own risk of catching COVID-19 by avoiding crowded places including public transport whenever possible and by regular handwashing.

The following may help reduce the risks at home:

- clean toilets and bathrooms regularly
- think about a bathroom rota if a separate bathroom is not available, with the at risk person using the facilities first
- use separate towels from anyone else in the household
- wash crockery and utensils thoroughly with soap and water or a dishwasher may be used

Other sources of information

Information from the government

The information for the public about COVID-19 is changing all the time. Please visit the official Government website for up to date information and advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Authors: Sandy Hayes, Dr Catriona Gilmour-Hamilton, Dr Andy Peniket, with advice from Dr Katie Jeffrey (03/03/2020)

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