



Strand Medical
Quality Health Matters

Covid -19 questions

I RECEIVED A TEXT FROM NHS ENGLAND TELLING ME I WAS AT RISK AND NEEDED TO SELF-ISOLATE, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? – a letter from the NHS follows the text and will explain the steps you need to take.

WHAT IS SOCIAL ISOLATION AND SOCIAL DISTANCING? – Information on shielding:

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51506729?fbclid=IwAR0IDZAH87Nqm6BErZh4XJvSUbobM2w695Y1rIq8WQVJ6WChpXYrdnrT_T4

I THINK I OR A FAMILY MEMBER HAVE CORONAVIRUS? - Please go to NHS111online

<https://111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19/?fbclid=IwAR1ubaCONzIa55IS4cmIseVUYKaEW1wrWjAjlOhTW8WbYhROmyN0em8mv0E>

COVID-19 AND PATIENTS WITH LONG-TERM CONDITIONS

- General information for patients with long term conditions:
- https://www.bbc.com/news/health-51703892?fbclid=IwAR2uO_XQ2B8oMONwugTaV2UbHowl0LIs3i1JOC0eVuI6_FZGkC2g49YaK_yw

I HAVE ASTHMA, HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT ME? Please check out the following site first:

- <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/>

I HAVE COPD OR ANOTHER LUNG CONDITION, HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT ME? Please check out the following site first:

- https://www.europeanlung.org/en/QA-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR0ziociFb_Gawnfqn_4wWf6LF2GtL7d3DLILX0kHJWQuc_35cBANK7YHr0
- Please also note we will be contacting you to make sure you have your rescue pack of steroids and antibiotics in case of exacerbation of COPD

I HAVE DIABETES, HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT ME? Please check out the following site first:

https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR2K2uBX0I4X9foWzi_5pnWOVlf2ufm33pN9iVFCRPWnzkj2rulyKW_hGI

I HAVE A BLOOD CANCER, HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT ME? Please check out the following site first:

<https://bloodcancer.org.uk/support-for-you/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-blood-cancer/>

I HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE OR A HEART CONDITION, HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT ME? Please check out the following site first:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2020/march/heart-patients-warned-to-take-extra-care-with-coronavirus-threat>

I AM A VULNERABLE PATIENT BUT I HAVE NOT RECEIVED MY LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

As far as we understand there are two broad groups of vulnerable patients with slightly different advice for each group:

- o **Vulnerable groups (would not have been expected to have received a government letter)**
 - Those who are pregnant.
 - Those over 70, regardless of any medical conditions.
 - Those adults under 70 who qualify for a flu jab, which means:
 - o Long-term respiratory conditions
 - o Chronic heart disease
 - o Chronic kidney disease
 - o Chronic liver disease
 - o Chronic neurological conditions
 - o Diabetes
 - o After a splenectomy/sickle cell disease
 - o Weakened immune system: HIV/AIDS, patients on steroids, having chemo
 - o Severe obesity (BMI ≥ 40)
 - **These people should practice social distancing (see below)**

- o **Extremely vulnerable groups** (these patients should be “shielding” and most will have been sent a letter if they had been identified by the government’s searches, see below)
 - Solid-organ transplant recipients
 - People with specific cancers:
 - o People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer (which we take to mean chemo for ANY cancer or those with lung cancer undergoing radical radiotherapy)
 - o Those with haematological cancers (at any stage of treatment). Those having immunotherapy, other antibody treatments or targeted cancer treatments that affect the immune system (e.g. protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors) for cancer

- Those who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the past 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- Those with severe respiratory conditions including those with cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD
- Those with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections, such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell (not sickle trait)
- Those on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- Pregnant women WITH significant heart disease

Please note we are awaiting advice on identifying other patients in these groups who have not been found by the government's searches to be able to get the letters to them as soon as possible. In the meantime any emails we receive from people thinking they are in this above group will be held and, when the advice on how we are to act on these comes through, we will send letters out to all those patients that we are advised should get them.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?

- Avoid contact with those who have symptoms
- Only use public transport if it is really essential – if you have to use it, use it at less busy times
- Work from home if possible
- Avoid large gatherings and gatherings with friends and family – use technology to keep in touch
- Contact essential services (GP, etc.) by phone/online means
- Look after your physical and mental health, despite all of the above

For those living with vulnerable groups: if someone in the household that a vulnerable person lives in gets COVID-19 symptoms, be particularly careful to follow the guidance on self-isolation within the home to minimise contact between the ill person and the vulnerable person as much as possible.

WHAT IS SHIELDING? (see government letter for more details)

- Stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact.
- Minimise any non-essential contact with others in the household. This means families should not visit except for essential care (washing, feeding, and dressing).
- Do not go out shopping, for leisure or for work.
- Essential visits from health professionals may continue, but these people must stay away if they have any symptoms of COVID-19, and anyone entering your home should wash their hands thoroughly on arrival.
- Ensure care providers are told that a client is in the extremely vulnerable group and is 'shielding' so they can apply additional precautions. Think now about who could help if the main carer was unwell/unable to come.
- When deliveries are made to the home, these should be left on the doorstep.

- Keep in touch with friends/family/work on the phone/internet/social media, rather than face-to-face.
- Looking after mental wellbeing (see: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>). Exercise within the home. You can go outside into a garden if it is a private space. If you sit on the doorstep, keep at least 2m from other household members/any neighbours.
- If you need to contact the GP/hospital, do so online or by phone. Arrange for medicines to be left on the doorstep.
- Those living in the house do NOT need to follow this guidance, but should follow social distancing advice, even at home, and reduce contact outside the home. This means not sharing a bed, using separate towels and avoiding being in shared spaces at the same time as other people.

I AM SHIELDING, HOW CAN I GET SUPPORT TO ALLOW ME TO SHIELD?

You should register either online here: https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable?fbclid=IwAR2iah1GWAq_e4XrGz6yx0C22n0zHARCKU4P2JrupxMGbnT0yDkeOSxHUEE

Or call 0800 028 8327

Or visit the local government website <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/coronavirus/community-support/>

I AM STRUGGLING WITH THE EFFECTS OF SELF ISOLATION OR SHIELDING HOW DO I GET HELP AND SUPPORT FOR THIS?

The government have launched a [new website](#) for patients to use in finding out what help they can get if affected by coronavirus. This service is available to all patients who are seeking advice and guidance on the topics such as:

- feeling unsafe
- going in to work
- paying bills or being unemployed
- getting food
- having somewhere to live
- mental health and wellbeing

Sick notes

I HAVE SUSPECTED COVID-19 OR AM HAVING TO SELF-ISOLATE, CAN I GET A FIT NOTE (SICK NOTE)? – Yes but **not from the surgery** – you can get one online from this address:

<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note?fbclid=IwAR0QqRlns-Bog3YFZjxvOCeducJ4b46lcoebIX7qWK86MVOYpbi-b8gc1RY>

For continuation of sick certificates (not Covid-19 related) please email or telephone the surgery.

For new sick certificates (not Covid-19 related) please telephone us.

Pregnancy

I AM PREGNANT, WHAT DO I DO? – Please go to the following website to self-register with the local midwives who will take on your care. There is no need to speak to us unless there are other issues you need to discuss.

<https://pregnancybooking.wsht.nhs.uk/?fbclid=IwAR1yZWtYbsOkD65UEhEFPBnq0LrfdjKW1gI8E2zGiYIZtgOfAUkweY2isEQ>

Blood test questions

I NEED A BLOOD TEST, ARE THESE STILL ONGOING?

- Urgent blood tests, for example those that are needed for monitoring of medications such as lithium, methotrexate or other potentially high-risk medications and warfarin are still being performed. Please contact the surgery to arrange – by phone at present.
- Non-urgent blood tests such as diabetes monitoring, cholesterol monitoring etc are being postponed for the moment as a short delay should not affect your health adversely.
- If you have an abnormal blood test result, we will be in contact with you. For all other blood tests that you normally have, we will prioritise these and arrange those that cannot be safely postponed.

Results

GETTING YOUR TEST RESULTS

The phones are very busy now and there are other ways to access your test results such as the:

NHS APP <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>

Note this can be signed up for online without needing to see the practice

ARE MY REGULAR VISITS TO THE SURGERY GOING AHEAD?

Childhood immunisations? - Yes important and going ahead

Prostap injections? - Yes although if on a monthly injection you may be converted to a 3 monthly preparation

B12 injections? - These are being postponed. It may be worth trying a high dose oral version of the medication – contact us for further information if you are due your injection.

Smear tests? – Annual – Yes, others, please contact us - the nursing team will triage the urgency of these to allow those most in need to have them done sooner and those that can wait, a little later

Denosumab injections? - Yes, will be continued at present

PSA monitoring? - if you are having regular PSA blood test monitoring after being seen by the urologists then your tests may be a little delayed but if it is due then call to discuss and arrange a date.

Baby checks? - yes initial 6-8 week baby checks will continue at present and of course routine immunisations are strongly encouraged.

Medication reviews? -These will be done either automatically by the clinical team reviewing a patients notes or over the phone. If you have received a message asking you to contact us for a medication review, call and we can make a telephone medication review appointment.

