

Help Us Help You Stay Safe in Hospital during COVID-19

This leaflet is intended for patients who have been invited to attend Derriford Hospital or one of our other treatment sites. We recognise that you may be worried about coming in for a face-to-face appointment, diagnostic test or treatment.

We would urge you to read this leaflet carefully so you can be reassured that we are doing everything we can to help you stay as safe as possible in hospital and so you know what to expect.

We are continuously monitoring what is happening with the pandemic. All planned care is subject to developments in the pandemic response and appointments may need to be rescheduled. We apologise if you are affected by this. Information on the changes we are making are available and kept updated on our website here: www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk/coronavirus

What to expect

We have taken a number of steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted in our hospital and clinic settings. These include:

- Observing the highest standards of infection prevention and control including our staff wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Isolating patients who test positive for COVID-19 or who are suspected of having the virus
- Encouraging patients and staff to practice 2m physical distancing from others, wherever possible
- Suspending our normal visiting arrangements so we reduce the amount of people coming into Derriford Hospital
- Moving services such as chemotherapy for vulnerable cancer patients and emergency care for minor injuries away from our main Derriford Hospital site

These measures help us to significantly reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Quality of care, patient safety and experience continue to be our number one priority.

If you do need to come in to Derriford Hospital, you will be asked to take steps to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 for your safety and the safety of our staff and other patients.

If you are currently shielding because you are at high risk of complications should you get COVID-19, but you need to come to Derriford Hospital or one of our clinics for planned care, please note we will try to ensure additional planning and protection measures are put in place. Please talk to your healthcare professional about any concerns you may have.

Face coverings

In line with Government advice, please wear a face covering to your appointment. Please bring a plastic bag with you to put your face covering into, should you need to take it off as part of your examination or treatment.

Coming in for an outpatient appointment

Where possible, remote appointments are being offered using video or telephone. We are asking patients to attend face-to-face services only when it is really necessary. If we do ask you to attend for a face-to-face outpatient appointment, it is because the healthcare professional treating you feels it is important to see you in person.

- Please only attend an outpatient appointment if you have no symptoms of COVID-19. If you are worried you may have symptoms, please call NHS 111 for advice. You can find out more about coronavirus at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
- The main symptoms of COVID-19 or coronavirus are:
 - high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
 - new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
 - Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms.
- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub
- Maintain at least 2m distance between yourself and others outside of your household.
- Please attend alone if you can, to help us reduce the number of people coming into the hospital. If you have a carer or need someone to come with you, please call the number on your appointment letter to discuss this
- Please try to arrive as close to your appointment time as you can

Coming in for a diagnostic scan

Please note that, in addition to the above, we are allowing more time between each appointment to allow longer for the cleaning of rooms and equipment. This also helps minimise the number of patients being sat together in waiting areas.

Coming in for a planned admission (including day surgery)

If you are being admitted to hospital, we need you to take extra precautions to minimise the risk presented by COVID-19. If COVID-19 infection occurs when you have surgery or whilst in hospital, this could make your recovery more difficult, or increase your risk of serious illness, or death.

Before your operation or procedure

- You and any members of your household should enter strict social isolation for 14 days prior to your surgery/procedure. Please note that for admissions and day surgery, unless you are able to isolate from your household effectively, your whole household is asked to isolate for the 14 days. Anyone who is booked in for planned care and needs to isolate prior can self-refer for support from the NHS volunteer programme. You can call the NHS Volunteer Responders helpline tel: 0808 196 3646 between 8am and 8pm or find more information about the programme at www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk
- Wear a cloth or face covering when indoors/in confined spaces with other people
- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap & water for 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub
- Maintain at least 2m distance between yourself and others outside of your household
- Most of your consultations will occur by telephone or email
- Your anaesthetic assessment will likely be by telephone with a nurse, and possibly an anaesthetist too

- You may be asked to complete a test for COVID-19 within 72 hours before coming for your procedure. We will contact you with details of how to do this and results are usually available 48 hours after being tested
- Your operation would be likely to be postponed if you test positive or are unwell
- If you are unable to isolate effectively or be tested before coming to hospital, your admission may be rescheduled. This will be determined by your care team using clinical judgement and in consultation with you
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 - Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms.
- Please also make sure you contact us if someone in your household develops symptoms

Your operation or procedure

- Your operation may not take place on the site that you were expecting. We will be operating at both Derriford Hospital and at the Peninsula Treatment Centre
- Circumstances may be different to what you have previously been used to in hospital. Wards may be reorganised, it may seem quieter and staff will be wearing PPE
- You may not meet your surgeons until the day of treatment, and they might not be the ones you expected. They will however be experienced and trained to perform your operation
- At the moment, due to COVID-19, we have suspended normal visiting so you will not be able to have your family and friends visit whilst in hospital
- If you start to show symptoms of coronavirus or test positive while admitted to Derriford Hospital, you will be immediately isolated to ensure the safety of other patients and staff
- It is possible that coming to hospital might increase your chances of contracting COVID 19 virus. If coronavirus infection occurs when you have surgery or whilst in hospital, this could make your recovery more difficult, or increase your risk of serious illness, or death

After your operation

- You should continue to self-isolate for a further 14days – after an anaesthetic/operation you will potentially be more vulnerable and at risk of infection
- You will be discharged from hospital when you are ready, or may be moved elsewhere to a 'step-down' unit to complete your recovery
- Some follow-up may be conducted by telephone

Discharge to a care home or hospice

If you are going to a care home or hospice after being in hospital, you will be tested for COVID-19 before you leave.

**For the latest advice and information
please visit:
www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk**

