

Coronavirus advice for patients coming to hospital and clinics

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 would urge you to read this leaflet carefully so you can be reassured we are doing everything we can to help you stay as safe as possible.

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 in
- Moving services such as orthopaedic surgery and emergency care for minor injuries away from our main Derriford Hospital site

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.

Do not attend with symptoms of COVID-19

Please only attend planned appointments 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.

Please also make sure you contact us if someone in your household develops symptoms

Face coverings

Please wear a face covering to your appointment and 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

Wherever 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.

- Please attend alone if you can, to help us reduce the number of people coming into the hospital unless a carer is required or in exceptional circumstances, for example, you are expecting to receive bad news. If you have any questions, 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

In addition to the above, all patients undergoing diagnostic tests and imaging scans, are asked to please follow comprehensive social-distancing and hand-hygiene measures for 14 days before coming in for your planned test or scan (see [government advice on social distancing on the nhs.uk website](#)). This helps us keep you and others attending our hospital and clinics as safe as possible.

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

In line with the latest NICE guidance, all patients undergoing a planned operation or procedure requiring anaesthetic or sedation, are asked to:

- Follow comprehensive social-distancing and hand-hygiene measures for 14 days before admission (see [government advice on social distancing on the nhs.uk website](#))
- Have a test for SARS-CoV-2 from 3 days before admission. We will contact you with details of how to do this. Your operation would be likely to be postponed if you test positive or are unwell.
- Self-isolate from the day of the test until admission

Being at greater risk

- If you are at greater risk of getting COVID-19, or having a poorer outcome if you get it, you may want to self-isolate before a planned procedure and the length of self-isolation should be 14 days. To find out if you are at greater risk, visit the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/

Your operation or procedure

- Your anaesthetic assessment will likely be by phone with a nurse and possibly an anaesthetist too
- 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 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

After your operation

- You should continue to practice social distancing for a further 14 days – 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

