

Coming into hospital

Essential information about coronavirus (COVID-19)

Information for patients

In response to the coronavirus pandemic we have introduced a number of changes to the way we run our services. This leaflet explains some of these changes and it gives you information about what we are doing that will keep you safe.

Some of these changes are already in place and others may take a little while longer but please be reassured that we are working hard to make sure the environment is safe for our patients and staff.

If you are coming into hospital for an outpatient appointment, procedure or scan, please read the following information.

Are you or any member of your household currently isolating for suspected symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If you or a member of your household has any symptoms, please rearrange your appointment. Symptoms include:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Check the NHS website if you have symptoms www.nhs.uk

Have you or any member of your household had symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the 7 days before your appointment?

If you or your household member have had any symptoms, please rearrange your appointment.

Are you shielding? (at higher risk from coronavirus)

If you have a shielding letter and you have either received an appointment or have an existing appointment with us, please ring the contact number on your letter/appointment card.

We will then be able to advise you whether you should attend and whether a telephone or

video appointment would be more appropriate for you.

If you do need to come in to hospital we will make specific arrangements for you to attend your clinic.

Preparing for your hospital appointment

- We ask all patients that they arrive to hospital wearing a face covering from home
- Please arrive for your appointment at the allocated time. Please do not be late or early.
- Staff may be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). This is in line with Public Health England guidance. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask our staff.
- Please attend the appointment alone if it safe to do so. If you need to be accompanied this must be with only one other person. Children should be accompanied by one adult only.
- Please access hand washing/hand gel available on arrival.
- Please observe social distancing whilst waiting and during your appointment. We will endeavour to signpost you to your appointment safely.
- When your appointment is finished, please leave the hospital promptly.

I am worried about the possibility of being infected with coronavirus when I attend hospital for my procedure, can you give me any reassurance?

- We are confident that we are doing everything to keep you safe.
- At Newcastle Hospitals we have had the longest running staff testing programme in the UK.
- We test staff who develop any symptoms at any time, as well as their household contacts. This helps to keep our patients safe.
- All our staff wear PPE during all patient contacts and we have never run out of any item of PPE. This protects patients and staff at all times.

- We test all patients on admission to hospital and we follow infection prevention and control procedures to minimise the risk of infection.

How we test for coronavirus (COVID-19)

There are two ways to detect the virus: a swab (PCR) and a blood test (antibody test)

- The swab can help find the virus if it is present at the time the swab is done. It does not tell us if you will have an infection in the coming days or months.

You may need a test if you are having surgery or if you need to be admitted to hospital or if you have developed symptoms. This test is usually done three days before your procedure, although sometimes this can vary. We do this test to ensure that we keep you and others safe during your admission.

You will be contacted only if your test is positive.

- The blood test tells us if you have had the infection in the past, but we won't know when exactly. We may need to do this test if you are being admitted, but we will let you know if this is the case.

Social distancing

The safety of our patients is our primary concern. To minimise the chances of getting coronavirus, it is very important that you maintain and follow social distancing measures at home for two weeks before your procedure.

This means avoiding contact with others as much as possible, both inside and outside of your home.

This may include not attending school or work during this period. Please discuss any specific concerns you may have about this with us by calling the number on your appointment letter.

Further information

If you need to make any changes to your outpatient appointment, please call the contact number on your appointment letter.

You can find out about more about changes to our services and visitors policy on our website: coronavirus.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk