

## Caring for you safely - frequently asked questions

### **Q Is it safe for me to attend my hospital appointment?**

We are putting in lots of measures to help keep you safe.

We are asking everyone to follow social distancing guidance, wear a face covering or mask and follow our Stay SAFE Keep APART signs. The patients who are coming in for planned care are being seen in dedicated parts of the hospitals – away from any confirmed and suspected Covid-19 patients. Our staff will also wear appropriate personal protective equipment during your appointment such as masks, visors or eye protection, gloves and aprons.

Other steps we're taking include:

- Asking patients to self-isolate before coming in for planned surgical treatment
- Testing patients for Covid-19 three days before surgery, and only going ahead with the procedure if the test is negative
- All staff working in the planned treatment areas have a temperature check and are asked about signs of Covid-19 every day, and day-case patients are also asked about symptoms and have their temperature checked on arrival.

### **Q Do I need to wear a mask on my journey to my hospital appointment?**

You must wear a face covering on all public transport, including taxis. This is to protect yourself and other passengers from coronavirus (Covid-19), alongside other safety measures such as social distancing, hand washing and the use of hand sanitiser.

Please follow the [Government safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

If you are travelling alone in your own vehicle you will not need a face covering. However, when you enter the hospital for your appointment you will be required to put on a face covering or mask, unless you have a medical reason not to. If you do not have a face covering, you can get a single use mask at the main reception when you show your letter.

### **Q I have to use public transport to get to the hospital – how can I protect myself and others?**

You must wear a face covering on all public transport, including taxis. This is to protect yourself and other passengers from coronavirus (Covid-19), along with other safety measures such as social distancing, hand washing and the use of hand sanitiser. Please follow the [Government safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

The risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus and the amount of time you spend in close contact: you are very unlikely to be infected from just walking past another person.

There may be situations where you can't keep a suitable social distance, for example when getting on or off, on busier services, at busier times of day and when walking through interchanges. In these situations avoid physical contact, try to face away from other people, and keep the time you spend near others as short as possible.

Be aware of the surfaces you touch. Be careful not to touch your face. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds after using public transport or use hand sanitiser gel.

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**Q Is patient transport still available?**

Yes. Patient transport is still available to those who are eligible. You can find more information on our [patient transport page](#).

**Q I will be coming by car – where can I find out about parking?**

You can find out more about parking at both our hospitals on our [parking page](#). To reduce the risk of infection we are reducing the numbers of people allowed into our buildings. So we ask you to attend your appointment alone, unless you have assistance or communication needs. If someone else is driving you, they may prefer to drop you off and collect you when you let them know that your appointment is finished, rather than waiting for you in the car park.

**Q My journey may take longer than usual – will I still be seen for my appointment?**

Please allow extra time for your journey to make sure you arrive on time. Please note that a few of our entrances are closed to help us keep different groups of patients safe. Please allow extra time to get to the right part of the hospital. Appointments should run to scheduled times, so you may not be seen if you arrive later. Please note however, that to help keep people safe, we are limiting the number of people in our waiting areas, so please do not go the clinic area more than twenty minutes before your appointment time.

**Q Do I need to bring my appointment letter?**

To help keep everyone safe we are restricting the number of people who can come into our hospitals. So you need to bring an appointment letter or text reminder with you. We ask you to attend your appointment alone, unless you have assistance or communication needs. Please remember to follow any instructions about what to do before your appointment and to bring any relevant medications.

**Q Can I bring someone with me to my appointment?**

To minimise infection we are reducing the numbers of people allowed in our buildings. So we ask you to attend your appointment alone, unless you have assistance or communication needs. If someone else is driving you, they may prefer to drop you off and collect you when you let them know that your appointment is finished, rather than waiting for you in the car park.

**Q One of my health conditions means I'm at higher risk of coronavirus (Covid-19) – should I keep my appointment?**

Some health conditions can make you more vulnerable to coronavirus. However it is important to continue to manage all your conditions to stop it from becoming worse and perhaps making you more vulnerable. If we have arranged an appointment for you at the hospital this means that the team looking after you would like to see you face-to-face. If you are concerned about this, please get in touch.

**Q I was identified as someone who needs to shield. Should I attend my appointment?**

Yes, if we have arranged an appointment at the hospital this means that the team looking after you would like to see you face-to-face. You must avoid public transport. If this is difficult, please speak to your clinical team, who may be able to arrange hospital transport. You should wear a face covering while travelling and when you arrive in the department please tell a member of staff you are shielding. If you are concerned about this then please contact us.

**Q I'm worried about coming to the hospital. Can my appointment be done by phone or video?**

We are offering phone and video appointments where possible, but on some occasions the team want to see you face-to-face. This might be to examine you, carry out a minor procedure or to obtain images such as X-rays.

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**Q I want to speak to someone about my condition before my appointment – who can I contact?**

Your hospital appointment letter will have a phone number for enquiries; you can call this number. If you have a question about your health and you have a contact number for a helpline or a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) please contact them.

**Q Who can I speak to about my appointment?**

You can call the number for enquiries on your hospital letter. If you have a question about your health and you have a contact number for a helpline or a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) please contact them.

**Q I was expecting a date for a hospital appointment but haven't heard anything – what do I do?**

If you think you have an appointment but haven't received a text or letter, or you think you should have been sent an appointment please contact our [outpatients call centre](#).

**Q I have an appointment in a few weeks or months' time – will I still be seen?**

Please attend your appointment unless we contact you to say that we have made alternative arrangements. We will let you know if we can offer you a phone or video appointment instead. We will also let you know if we have to rearrange or cancel your appointment.

**Q Are language interpreters and British Sign Language interpreters still able to support me at my appointment?**

Yes, this support is still available if booked. To comply with social distancing most interpreting will use the telephone interpreting service unless for British Sign Language, or appointments in maternity or children's services. There is more information on our [interpreting page](#).

**Q Will I be able to buy food and drink at the hospital?**

Coffee shops and shops selling sandwiches, drinks and cakes are open at both our hospitals. Please keep your mask on as you approach the counter. However our hospital restaurants remain closed to the public.

**Q My skin is sensitive to alcohol based hand sanitiser – is there an alternative?**

Hand washing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds has been shown to be just as effective. Please tell a member of staff at the hospital entrances that you are unable to use hand sanitiser. As soon as you arrive at your appointment area please ask where you can wash your hands.

**Q My mobility is affected by a physical disability – what help is available to support me to attend my appointment?**

Staff will be available to assist you. Please ask for any assistance you need at the main entrance. Staff will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks, visors, aprons and gloves to protect you and others.

