



Queen Victoria Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Self- isolation and patient screening information during COVID-19



This leaflet provides guidance of how to prepare for your surgery.

To protect you and make sure you are as prepared as possible for your booked surgery, if you have cancer or are clinically vulnerable you will be advised to undertake 14 days of self-isolation prior to your admission. All other patients need to follow enhanced social distancing, staying at least 2 meters from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces, 14 days prior to your admission with isolation for the last 72 hours. You should also use good hand hygiene, washing your hands regularly and frequently with soap and water.

This is to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19, which can cause severe complications and impact your post-operative recovery.

If you are not able to follow this guidance, or do not follow this, your surgery may be cancelled or postponed to an alternative date.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are the recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature (37.8 or above)
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above, or feel generally unwell, you must stay at home and contact either your GP or NHS111 for further advice. Once this advice has been given please contact your scheduling team for further advice regarding your admission. Please be aware your surgery may need to be postponed if it is not deemed safe for you to proceed at this time.

If your surgery does need to be delayed a further date of admission will be provided for you following a further 14 days of isolation.

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation is about protecting others and slowing down the spread of COVID-19. It is very important that anyone who has the virus, or might have been exposed to it, limits the number of people they come into contact with for 14 days. This is the most effective way of preventing the coronavirus from spreading.

Government guidance states you must undertake a period of 14 days strict self-isolation prior to your admission to hospital if you have cancer or are clinically vulnerable. This means you are unable to leave the house under any circumstances other than for an emergency or urgent medical treatment.

Necessary hospital appointments must be attended as planned but only if they are part of your current admission pathway.

During your self-isolation period you must;

- Not leave your house. This includes not attending any shops and undertaking any physical activity outside of your property boundary. However, it is important to remain as active as possible within your home environment during this time
- Not attend any gatherings, including those with other members of the family or have any physical contact with anyone outside of your immediate household
- Not have any visitors, except people who are providing you with essential care requirements
- Strictly avoid contact with anyone displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Make arrangements for your food and medicines to be delivered to you in your home
- Wash your hands at regular intervals, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, throat and mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces at home

If you are living with others in your household you should minimise the time you spend in shared spaces, keeping these areas well ventilated, remaining two metres apart wherever possible. If you share a kitchen, aim to cook at separate times and consider eating food in separate spaces. It is important to keep your utensils and cutlery separate using your own tea towel.

Where possible you should aim to sleep separately, using different bathrooms and towels to others. If this is not possible to use a different bathroom from others it should be cleaned each time after use.

Everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.

Do the rest of the household need to follow this guidance?

If the rest of your household follows this guidance as well, there is no need for them to take full protective measures. If you, or anyone in your household develops any symptoms, or suspected symptoms of COVID-19, please let us know immediately.

Should I wear a facemask?

Consider using a face covering inside your home when spending time in shared parts of the household. Face coverings should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting it on and after taking it off. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth at all times and store used face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them. Once removed, make sure you clean any surfaces the face covering has touched.

You should wash a face covering regularly. It can go in with other laundry, using your normal detergent.

You must ensure you have one month's supply of your regular medicines prior to starting your self-isolation period. You will need to arrange this with the normal team who provide your medicines.

If possible to do so, you should work from home. If your work requires you to travel, you will need to make alternative arrangements not to travel or to take time off work.

What other screening will I have prior to my admission?

All patients, at least 72 hours before the day of admission will be contacted to arrange a convenient date and time for your SARS-CoV-2 swab. The swab will be taken from your throat and nose to test for COVID-19.

Patients not advised to undertake strict self-isolation guidance must, after their SARS-CoV-2 swab, undertake strict self-isolation until the time of their admission.

The results of this swab will be available prior to your admission. If you do not received a telephone call from us, please proceed to admission as planned.

We will only contact you if this test result is positive.

What if my swab result is positive?

If your swab result is positive you will be contacted by your Consultant or a member of their team. Your admission will be delayed. You will be advised the need to continue with a further 10 days of self-isolation and until you are clinically well. Once this has been completed the scheduling team will be in contact with you to reschedule your date of admission. You will also require a further swab prior to this planned date.

How can I travel for essential hospital visits?

If you need to travel to come to essential hospital visits, where possible, this should be carried out prior to your period of self-isolation.

All travel must be, where possible, within a private household car either on your own or with someone from your household to ensure you are able to continue with your self-isolation. You should keep the car well ventilated throughout the journey and sit apart as far as possible. If this is not possible, please contact the hospital scheduling team for further advice and support in arranging transport for you.

On arrival to the hospital site our staff will ask you relevant questions relating to COVID-19 and will take your temperature. Once these checks have been completed you will be provided with a face mask and advised to attend the relevant area to proceed to your admission.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic family or friends will be unable to enter the hospital building. They must either remain in the car or leave the hospital site to await your discharge time and destination. The Discharge Lounge or ward team will be in contact with them to advice of these arrangements on the day of your discharge.

What other things should I consider prior to my admission?

You must ensure you have one month's supply of your regular medicines prior to starting your self-isolation period. You will need to arrange this with the normal team who provide your medicines.

If possible to do so, you should work from home. If your work requires you to travel, you will need to make alternative arrangements not to travel or to take time off work.

If you are unable to work from home, you should discuss and agree the options available to you with your employer and to consider taking an alternative role or adjust working patterns temporarily during this time.

What guidance should I follow on discharge?

On discharge from hospital you will also be advised to continue with a further 14 days of enhanced social distancing, staying at least 2 meters from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. You should also use good hand hygiene, washing your hands regularly and frequently with soap and water.

If you should have any questions about this guidance and would like further information please see the link below to the hospital website;

www.qvh.nhs.uk/cancer-patients-during-covid

Alternatively, please contact your scheduling team directly.

Breast scheduling team:

Tel: 01342 414373/01342 414124 Monday – Friday 7am-6pm

qvh.breastschedulingteam@nhs.net

Skin scheduling team:

Tel: 01342 414232

qvh.skinschedulingteam@nhs.net

Head and Neck scheduling team:

Tel: 01342 414393 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8am-4pm

Tel: 01342 414309 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-3.30pm

qvh.headandneckschedulingteam@nhs.net

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