



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 should self-isolate for 14 days prior to your date of admission.

For all other patients social distancing and enhanced hand hygiene is recommended for the 14 days leading up to your admission.

All patients will have a SARS-CoV-2 (PCR) swab at least 72 hours ahead of admission and will be expected to self-isolate until their admission date.

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 most important 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 10 days. This is the most effective way of preventing the coronavirus from spreading.

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

For all other patients you are advised to self-isolate from the time of your SARS-CoV-2 (PCR) swab until the time of your admission, following the strict guidance as stated below.

Any urgent hospital appointments must be attended as planned.

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

- regularly 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 your day of admission you will be contacted to arrange a convenient date and time for your SARS-CoV-2 (PCR) swab. The swab will be taken from your throat and nose to test for COVID-19.

The results of this swab will be available prior to your admission. If you do not receive 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 result returns positive your surgery will be postponed and you will be asked to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days and you will be advised to contact NHS 111 for further support and guidance.

After this period of isolation, prior to your surgery being rearranged, you will be contacted by your Consultant who will evaluate your current health status, following your COVID-19 episode, prior to being rescheduled for surgery, to ensure you are fit for your planned treatment. This will require a telephone assessment in the first instance with a further face to face appointment should an additional assessment be required. Following this discussion a plan will be made for your admission and a new date will be provided to you.

For patients that remain symptomatic after this time will be advised to continue their self-isolation until their symptoms resolve. This group of patients will not require a further SARS-CoV-2 (PCR) prior to admission if within 3 months of the positive COVID result.

How can I travel for essential hospital visits?

You should aim to travel to your hospital appointments/ admission using your own private vehicle, which may be driven by a member of your household (who has been taking the same precautions as you). If this is not possible, you may travel in a friend/ relative's car or in a taxi. In this situation, you must take the following precautions:

- Check that the driver does not have any symptoms such as a continuous cough or fever
- You and the driver must wear a face mask or covering
- You should sit in the rear passenger seat or as far away from the driver as possible
- You should ensure that the car is ventilated by keeping the windows open (weather permitting)
- You should sanitise your hands immediately after the journey

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic family or friends will be unable to wait in the hospital whilst you have your surgery or treatment. For patients that require support or need to be accompanied during their visit can be supported by a family member or carer with prior arrangement.

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?

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.

Please ask if you
would like this leaflet
in larger print or an
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