

Coming into hospital for consultations, intervention and treatment

You have been given this leaflet because you are booked in for a consultation, procedure or surgery. We know that this is a worrying time and we hope that the information in this leaflet will help to reassure you that we have put in place measures to keep you, and the staff who will be looking after you, safe while you are in the hospital/clinic.

The recent coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has meant many hospital/clinic services were stopped. It is now possible for us to reopen services, but we need to do this slowly and safely. To do this some changes have been made to keep all our patients and staff safe. This includes how and where we provide care to our patients, and what you will need to do before coming in to the hospital/clinic and what you can expect when you arrive.

It is important that you read this leaflet in full and if you are unsure of anything or have any questions, please ring the phone number on your hospital/clinic letter.



What is my risk of getting COVID-19 while in the hospital/clinic?

It is currently not possible to entirely eliminate the risk of catching COVID-19 while you are in the hospital/clinic. However, we are taking every possible measure to ensure our hospital/clinics remain completely Covid free and to minimise your risk of infection. This includes:

- screening all patients and staff
- use of personal protective equipment
- additional training for all staff on how to limit the spread of the infections
- handwashing/sanitising stations
- social distancing
- regular cleaning
- when applicable testing patients for COVID-19
- single rooms or cubicles for patients.

There is an increased risk of complications should you have an operation while Covid positive. This is a risk that your surgical team will consider very carefully and discuss with you before recommending that any planned operation goes ahead. If you have had a covid positive test in the last 7 weeks please contact us for advice.

We are also testing all staff who work in oncology or chemotherapy every two weeks.



How should I prepare for my operation?

Talk to your clinician or doctor

If you have concerns about the timing of your operation, you should discuss these with your surgeon. You might want to ask about:

- the benefits and risks of the procedure
- the risks of catching COVID-19
- your risk from any pre-existing medical conditions
- the possible side effects of the proposed operation
- alternative options for treatment, including non-surgical care or no treatment
- advice on your lifestyle patterns that may reduce your risk of complications after surgery or may change the progress of your condition
- any further treatment after the operation that will be required (e.g. physiotherapy) and how you will access it.



Virtual consultations

Whether you are having a discussion about a recommended treatment, a rescheduled operation or having your initial pre-operative assessment with a member of the clinical team, this consultation may take place online or by phone, rather than face-to-face, to limit the number of people coming to hospitals/clinics while COVID-19 is still present in our community. Visits to hospitals/clinic must only occur when absolutely necessary, such as when urgent scans or other examinations are required.



Before You Come in to the Hospital or Clinic

Before you are admitted to the hospital or clinic there are some precautions that you will be asked to take to reduce the risk of you having COVID-19.

You will be asked to undertake comprehensive social distancing and strict hand hygiene for the 14 days before you come in.

If you are having a general anaesthetic or sedation or being admitted to certain parts of the hospital or clinic you will be asked to come to the hospital 72 hours before your procedure to have a swab taken for COVID-19. For the next three days until you are admitted to the hospital or clinic you will be asked to self-isolate at home.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 such as a new and continuous cough, a high temperature and/or a change or loss of taste and/or smell please do not come to the hospital or clinic. Please telephone us and speak to a member of staff.

What you can do to minimise the risks of your surgery?

There are steps you can take yourself to prepare for surgery and minimise the risk of complications from your operation, by improving your health and adopting a healthier lifestyle. This can improve the outcomes of your operation and reduce your recovery time. In some types of surgery, this might also allow you to be treated as a day-case, where you can leave the hospital/clinic on the same day of the operation.

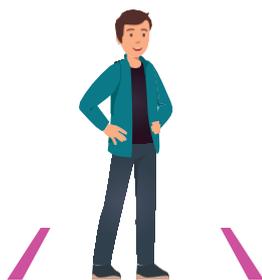
What will happen when I am in the hospital/clinic for my procedure?

Your safety is our number one priority and so we have put in place some new measures to protect the health of our patients and staff and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We would like to share with you what to expect when you come into our facilities for treatment.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When you are here, please wear a face mask or face covering or other type of personal protective equipment (PPE) and most staff will be wearing some kind of PPE, too. If you do not have a face covering or mask we will be able to supply you with a mask on arrival. Depending on the area in the hospital/clinic, to protect you, staff will be using PPE this could be a mask, a visor or goggles, a plastic apron or full coveralls. It could mean that the faces of those treating you will be covered. Please do not let this stop you communicating with staff as you normally would. If you find it difficult to hear or understand what is being said through the PPE, please make staff aware, so that they take this into account and provide alternative ways of communicating with you. If you have difficulty wearing a mask or face covering for medical reasons do contact us and let us know prior to your arrival.



Social distancing and queuing

Please arrive at the time of your appointment or admission and not earlier, to reduce the total amount of time you need to spend in the hospital/clinic, unfortunately we can only admit you at the time of your appointment.

You will notice that we are working very hard to maintain social distancing wherever possible. Our team will help direct you safely to where you need to be. You might notice signage and markings to help with guiding you safely around our facilities and showing you where to safely stand, sit or wait. Please help us to help you, by following the directions in place. If you are unsure of where you should be, our staff will be happy to help you.



Visitors

In order to reduce the number of people in our hospital/clinics at any one time and minimise the risk of infection, we are not allowing visitors. We ask that you come alone to all appointments, unless of course you need the assistance of a carer, or if you are bringing a child in for an appointment. There may be circumstances where visitors are permitted. Please contact the hospital to discuss your individual request with the sister in charge.

In the exceptional circumstances, visitors who are allowed into the hospital/clinic premises will be asked to wear protective equipment. We encourage patients to use phone and video calls to communicate with friends and relatives during their hospital/clinic stay. Before going to the hospital/clinic, consider how you will communicate with your family and friends and make sure you have the equipment to do this and you know how to use it. You should follow the local advice of your hospital/clinic at all times.



Hand hygiene

Maintaining good hand hygiene is essential to reduce the transmission of infection in health care settings. When you enter, we will be asking you to use hand sanitiser or hand wash. Please also ensure that you practice good hand hygiene by regularly washing your hands.



Respiratory hygiene

While you are here, you can help minimise potential COVID-19 transmission through practising good respiratory hygiene measures. Use a disposable, single-use tissue to cover your nose and mouth when sneezing, coughing and wiping or blowing your nose. Used tissues should be disposed of promptly in the nearest waste bin. Please remember to wash or sanitize your hands after coughing, blowing your nose and disposing of any tissues, and to keep your hands away from your eyes, mouth and nose.



Single rooms or cubicles

Any patient using our day care facilities will be socially distanced and placed in a single cubicle to minimise opportunities for close contact. All patients coming in for an overnight stay will be placed in a single room.



Additional Cleaning

Our facilities are cleaned professionally in line with government guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All patient rooms and equipment are cleaned throughout each day and in-between patients.

What will happen after my treatment or operation?



Recovery and discharge after my operation

After your operation, you will be able to recover in a private room or cubicle.

The length of time you spend in the hospital/clinic will depend on the complexity of your operation and the speed of your recovery. For some operations, when there are no complications, you will be able to leave the hospital/clinic on the same day. You should discuss with your surgical team what help you may need upon leaving.

Follow up and discharge after my treatment

When you are discharged, you will normally return to your home. You should have a contact number from your clinical team where you can seek advice if you have any concerns. If you need to spend time in rehabilitation or need services such as physiotherapy, the same infection prevention measures outlined above will be used in these facilities. You should make sure that you follow the instructions in your discharge letter and remain in contact with your GP, who will be aware of any ongoing care or nursing you might need at home.

Follow up appointments

Before you leave, you should try to find out your options for any follow-up appointments and post-operative visits that you may need. Unless further treatment is needed (e.g. chemotherapy), or there are complications after your operation, follow-up appointments may take place via video, or over the phone, to reduce the risk of infection. You can speak with your GP in the same way.

Frequently asked questions

Is it safe to come to the hospital/clinic while I am shielding?

If you are currently shielding, you may attend your hospital/clinic appointments, but please follow the instructions in this leaflet carefully. Please let the department you are visiting know you are shielding.

Are visitors allowed with me?

In order to minimise the number of patients in the hospital or clinic at any one time, we are asking that all patients please come alone. We recognise of course that there are some cases that will be exempt, for example, patients who need the assistance of a carer, parents bringing a child in for treatment and/or patients coming in for end of life care.

Will the hospital/clinic be busy?

When you attend the hospital/clinic there will only be a few patients waiting in waiting areas, it should not be busy.

Will the hospital/clinic be cleaned regularly?

All our hospital/clinic areas, including those for appointments are cleaned on a daily basis and in between patients.

Do you need to social distance in the hospital/clinic?

Yes - please follow social distancing rules when you walk through the hospital or clinic.

What does comprehensive social distancing and hand hygiene mean?

Social distancing means maintaining, where possible a 2 meter distance between you and other people. If you cannot maintain this distance or if you are going in to shops, supermarkets and other closed spaces outside of your home you should wear a mask or face covering and keep at least 1 meter away from other people.

You should also wear masks or face coverings while on public transport. Advice on face masks and coverings can be found [here](#). More information can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications

Hand hygiene must be performed regularly by washing or sanitising. Government guidance on hand hygiene can be found [here](#). More information can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/news

More information can be found on social distancing [here](#). More information can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications

What does self-isolating mean?

Self-isolating means that you must stay at home and do not have contact with anyone outside your home and as little contact as possible with the rest of your household for the full period of self-isolation.

If you live with others there are some practical steps to take. These are:

- Staying physically apart as much as possible. Sleep in separate rooms and use different bathrooms if you can. We do recognise that many patients are not able to do this.
- Minimising the amount of time you spend in shared spaces such as the kitchen. Trying to stay at least two metres (three steps) apart.
- Regularly cleaning, with disinfectant, any surfaces you use a lot, such as kitchen counters. Wash your hands regularly, for 20 seconds each time.
- Make sure to sneeze or cough into tissues, your elbow, or your sleeve, and throw away the tissues straight after using them.
- Don't use the same towels or crockery and make sure anything has been washed thoroughly before it's used by someone else.
- Do not leave your home for any reason – if you need food or medication order it online or by phone or ask someone to deliver it to your home.
- Do not have visitors to your home – including friends and family, except people who give you essential care. Do any exercise at home – you can use your garden if you have one.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, throat and mouth with unwashed hands

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for choosing Aspen Healthcare and for following these new health measures which are designed to keep you safe