

## Coming into hospital for consultations, intervention and treatment

You have been given this leaflet because you are booked in for a 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 (COVID19) 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.

### Before you come in to the clinic

Before you are admitted to the 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 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 clinic you will be asked to self-isolate at home.

If you develop any of the symptoms of COVID-19, such as a new and continuous cough, a high temperature, a change in or loss of taste and/or smell OR if you live in an area which is subject to local lockdown procedures please let the hospital or clinic know as soon as possible. Do not attend the hospital or clinic until you have spoken to a member of our staff.



### 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
- 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.



### How should I prepare for my operation?

#### Talk to your 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.

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## Virtual consultations

Whether you are having a discussion about a rescheduled operation or having your initial pre-operative assessment with a member of the surgical 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.



## Self-isolation, COVID-19 screening and testing

Before you are admitted to the hospital/clinic, you may be asked to undergo a self-isolation period at home. Anyone who lives with you will need to do the same. Prior to admission you will be asked to take part in a health screening questionnaire to identify any symptoms of COVID-19 such as:

- high temperature
- continuous cough
- or loss of taste or smell.

If you are a theatre patient you will also have a COVID-19 swab test to check if you have the virus.

If you are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, your operation will most likely need to be rescheduled, for your own safety. Currently only life-saving or urgent surgery should take place, in patients with either confirmed or suspected Covid.

## 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.

## 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, you may be asked to wear a mask or face covering or other type of personal protective equipment (PPE) and most staff will be wearing some kind of PPE, too. Depending on the area in the hospital/clinic, 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.



## 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.

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.

In 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 keep your hands away from your eyes, mouth and nose and to wash your hands afterwards.



## Single rooms or cubicles

Any patient using our facilities will be socially distanced and placed in a single cubicle or room to minimise opportunities for close contact.



## Additional cleaning

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

## What will happen after my 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. 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, 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.



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## 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.

We advise you let them know at your phone assessment and when you arrive at the hospital/clinic.

### 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. We ask in these circumstances that you please inform our Director of Nursing prior to coming in so we can best prepare for your arrival.

### 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 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own)

Hand hygiene must be performed regularly by washing or sanitising. Government guidance on hand hygiene can be found here [www.gov.uk/government/news/public-information-campaign-focuses-on-handwashing](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-information-campaign-focuses-on-handwashing)

More information can be found on social distancing here [www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july)

### What does self-isolating mean?

Self-isolating means that you need to stay at home and that you do not have contact with anyone inside or outside your home during the full period of your 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 and then wash your hands.
- Don't use the same towels or crockery and make sure anything has been washed thoroughly before it's used by someone else.

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

**Thank you for choosing The Edinburgh Clinic and for following these new guidance measures which are designed to keep you safe**