

# Preparing for Elective Surgical Admissions - Advice for Patients

An information guide



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**If your Tier or local guidance concerning meeting other people is stricter than these guidelines, then you MUST follow that guidance.**

## Surgery during the Coronavirus pandemic

All of our Care Organisations across the Northern Care Alliance are working tirelessly to tackle the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. The delivery of safe surgery is the utmost priority for us all, patients, family and staff.

You should be strongly reassured that we have been conducting planned surgery throughout the pandemic and the measures outlined below have enabled us to keep everyone, patients and staff alike, completely safe.

However, due to the increased health and safety risks associated with this virus, some extra steps are needed to safeguard you and the staff who are going to look after you whilst you are in hospital.

Vaccination against COVID-19 has begun within the UK but it is still very important that you continue to **follow our guidance** on isolating prior to your procedure, continue to socially distance and clean your hands regularly even if you have been vaccinated.

Your team have recommended surgery and it is **essential that you follow the advice in this leaflet** to ensure that everybody is protected from potential infection.

## Planning for your surgery

Your clinical team will discuss the new procedures and processes in place to ensure your safety and to safeguard all our staff during the pandemic. They are there to address all your concerns and answer all your questions.

The routes into our care organisations and the wards within them have been redesigned to ensure the safest pathway for you and to minimise your risk of infection from admission to discharge.

Your clinical team will discuss **your** individual risks of surgery and for COVID-19 infection and then recommend a pathway of care for you based on these risks. This could be **either**

- 11 days of **comprehensive social distancing** as described by NHS England (link on page 12) and hygiene instructions (**Sections A & B** see page 6 & 7) , followed by 3 days of **shielding** (**Section C** see page 8) after a COVID swab has been taken **OR**
- 14 days of **shielding** (**Section C** see page 8) with a COVID swab 3 days before surgery

**Please ensure you confirm with your clinical team which pathway you are on and follow the guidance below.**

**Prior to coming into hospital it is important that you:**

1. Confirm that you have not had COVID-19 symptoms in the last 14 days (see page 4).
2. Confirm that no member of your household is currently unwell with COVID-19 symptoms (see page 4).
3. Commit to **comprehensive social distancing** prior to surgery for 14 days (**Section A** see page 6) or to follow a 14 day **shielding**

pathway (Section C see page 8) as recommended by your clinical team.

4. Commit to a swab test for COVID-19, 3 days before your operation date, shielding from this point **until your day of surgery** and please be aware that if you do not attend for your test or if it is positive your surgery may be postponed.

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

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

**On the day of surgery:**

- You will enter the hospital through an entrance specified in your admission letter.
- You will be required to clean your hands and put on a face mask if you are able to tolerate one.
- You will need to bring proof you have to attend hospital which will be checked by security. You will be directed to the receiving area where you are due to have your operation.
- Your swab test result will be reviewed by your clinical team.
- The staff treating you will be wearing face masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) for your protection.
- Unfortunately due to the risks of infection no visitors are allowed; however we will ensure your family are updated on the progress of your surgery and video calling may be allowed.
- Patients who require support through reasonable adjustments will be allowed a carer to attend with them.

## It is important to understand that:

- The risk to you of proceeding with the planned surgery is a combination of normal risks of the operation plus additional risks of you developing COVID-19. There is some very limited evidence that catching COVID-19 whilst recovering from surgery may mean a more serious form of the disease could occur. The true outcomes of COVID-19 infection in surgical patients are not currently well known.
- Coming into hospital may slightly increase the chance of contracting COVID-19.
- You are expected to follow the recommended pathway of care which your clinical team will have discussed with you.
- You should follow the additional instructions on **hygiene (Section B see page 7)**.
- You will be tested 3 days prior to your planned admission date for COVID-19 with swabs from your nose and back of throat. You will be contacted by the hospital to arrange this appointment.
- Swab testing is not 100% accurate and can miss cases of the condition (approximately 1 in 10).
- You will be informed of the result of your swab (Positive or Negative) prior to surgery. If there is a delay in the results and they are unavailable until the morning of your procedure you may still be cancelled in the event the result is positive.
- If your test is positive your surgery may have to be postponed for your own safety.
- 3 days prior to surgery, and following your swab, you are expected to shield. This is very important. Shielding requires you to follow a certain protocol as set out by **Public Health England/NHS** (link on page 12 or see **Section C** on page 8).
- Your treatment may be delayed, performed differently or cancelled at short notice during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Visitors may not be allowed during your stay in hospital.

- Our care organisations continue to bring forward a range of steps and procedures to minimise risks to patients of COVID-19

## **Section A - Comprehensive social distancing - to be followed by all patients.**

- You **SHOULD** stay at home as much as possible.
- Stay **ALERT** and **KEEP** a safe distance if you go out.
- **DO** try to take outdoor exercise at least once a day, such as going for a walk.
- Work from home if you can. If not, please ensure your workplace is COVID-secure as per government guidelines.
- **AVOID** public transport if possible. Sanitise your hands immediately before and after travelling.
- If you have to use public transport wear a face covering.
- Only attend essential medical appointments which you feel are essential.
- Limit contact with other people.
- **AVOID** coming in to contact with anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19.
- **DO NOT** have any visitors inside your home.
- **DO NOT** meet indoors with friends and family who do not live in your home with you. You may meet outdoors keeping a safe distance.
- If possible, **AVOID** going out for shopping; arrange for this to be delivered to your home.
- **DO NOT** travel on holiday or abroad.
- **AVOID** visiting public places that pose risk of exposure to the virus such as pubs, bars, restaurants or some places of worship.
- You should **CANCEL** any non-urgent dental or medical appointments whilst you are socially distancing.

## Section B - Hygiene Instructions to be followed by all patients.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitiser if water and soap is unavailable.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth and face covering with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after touching pets.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your home.
- Use separate household items from other people sharing your home such as towels, bedding and crockery.
- Wear a face covering whenever you go out of your home.
- Aim to travel to hospital or for your preoperative COVID swab using your own private vehicle which may be driven by a member of your household.
- If you need to travel in someone else's car or a taxi **you must take the following precautions:**
  - Check the driver does not have continuous cough or fever.
  - Both you and the driver must wear a face mask or covering.
  - Sit in the rear passenger seat as far from the driver as possible.
  - Ensure car is ventilated with open windows (weather permitting).
- Sanitise your hands immediately before and after travelling.

If you or any household member becomes unwell during this 14 day isolation period you must report it to us immediately by contacting the Booking & Scheduling Department on 0161 778 2233 and follow the options given.

## Section C - Self Isolation or Shielding to be followed by all patients following COVID swab and for those patients recommended to follow a 14 day shielding pathway.

### Shielding at home

Following your pre-arranged Covid-19 swab test, 3 days before your operation date, you should remain at home for the remaining time before attending on the day of the operation.

- If you wish to spend time outdoors (though not in other buildings, households, or enclosed spaces) you should take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping **2 metres apart**.
- If you choose to spend time outdoors, this can be with members of your own household. If you live alone, you can spend time outdoors with one person from your support bubble.
- You should **stay alert** when leaving home: washing your hands regularly, maintaining social distance and avoiding gatherings of any size.
- You **should not** attend any gatherings, including gatherings of friends and families in private spaces, for example, parties, weddings and religious services.
- You **should strictly avoid** contact with anyone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (see page 4).



## Shielding whilst living with other people

The rest of your household do not need to start shielding themselves, but they should do what they can to support you in shielding and to carefully follow the same comprehensive social distancing guidance as yourself.

At home you should still:

- Minimise the time other people living with you spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
- Keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If you can, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying yourself after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.
- If you share a toilet and bathroom with others, it's important that they are cleaned every time after use (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with you using the facilities first.
- If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while they're present. If you can, take your meals back to your room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing-up liquid and water and dry them thoroughly. If you are using your own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.
- Everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not smoke and limit your alcohol intake to ensure you are in the best shape for your procedure.

## **Why are these steps necessary?**

- This is to reduce the risk to you of becoming infected with COVID-19.
- This is to reduce the risk of you passing on Covid-19 infection to other vulnerable patients in hospital.
- This is to reduce the risk of you passing on Covid-19 infections to hospital staff.

If you are unable to comprehensively social distance for 14 days before your operation and/or unable to attend for your pre-arranged swab test then please inform your clinical team as your operation may be postponed and rearranged.

## **Section D - Some conditions (from the nhs.uk Coronavirus website) increase the risk of developing serious COVID-19 infection. These include :**

- Obesity (BMI >30).
- Diabetes.
- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
- Chronic kidney disease/liver disease or patients undergoing dialysis.
- Serious heart conditions.
- Having a weakened immune system which can be caused by conditions including cancer, smoking, bone marrow/organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, HIV or AIDS, and steroid use.
- Patients undergoing major surgery.

If you have one or more of these conditions and/or you are having major surgery your clinical team may recommend 14 days of shielding to help minimise the risk to you if you were to get COVID-19 infection around the time of your operation.

If you have any COVID questions relating to surgery, especially if you have one of these conditions above, please contact the surgical team looking after you. It is important you feel you have all questions and concerns addressed before proceeding.

### **Other things that can affect your risk**

Some community and environmental circumstances are likely to increase the risk of acquiring the infection and possibly becoming seriously ill from coronavirus, including if you are:

- Over 60 years – your risk increases as you get older.
- From a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background (BAME) - more likely to live in Urban areas, deprived areas, overcrowded households and have jobs that expose them to higher risks.
- Patients from a nursing or care home - more likely to be elderly, have existing medical conditions and are confined to living areas with others.

## **Links**

### **Comprehensive social distancing:**

<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/stay-alert-to-stay-safe/overview/>

### **Public Health England/NHS :**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

### **COVID-19 information:**

<https://www.pov.uk/coronavirus>

### **Digital Mental Health Resources:**

<https://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/digital-mental-health-resources/>

## Contact details

### Booking & Scheduling Department

If you or any household member becomes unwell during the 14 day isolation period please telephone: **0161 778 2233** and follow the options given.

### Local Community Hubs

Community hubs are a partnership between the voluntary sector, health service and local authorities established in every borough to offer support to local residents. You can get help, advice and access to essential supplies, as well as linking residents to the appropriate services and groups for support.

**Bury** - Telephone: 0161 253 5353

**Manchester** - Telephone: 0800 234 6123

**Oldham** - Telephone: 0161 770 7007

**Rochdale** - Telephone: 01706 923 685

**Salford** - Telephone: 0800 952 1000

These are usually open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

### NHS Volunteer Responder Service

If you are over 70 years of age, are registered as disabled, have a long term chronic health condition, or are pregnant then this service can offer the following support:

- Short term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness and self-isolation.
- Collecting shopping, medication or other essential supplies for someone who is self-isolating and delivering these supplies to their home.
- Transports patients to and from hospital appointments or from a stay in hospital once the patient is medically fit.

Telephone: **0808 196 3382** - Open 7 days a week from 9am to 6pm.





**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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To improve our care environment for Patients, Visitors and Staff, **Northern Care Alliance NHS Group** is Smoke Free including buildings, grounds & car parks.

For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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