



# ADVICE TO PATIENTS

# COVID-19



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# What to do if you have symptoms

**The latest advice from the government is to self-isolate if you have symptoms of a high temperature and a new cough.**

**You do not need to contact your GP to do this. If you do not feel unwell, there is no need to contact your GP.**

**Advice about self-isolating can be found here:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

If you feel unwell or breathless whilst doing normal activities which would not normally cause you to be breathless and have a high fever or a new cough please, **contact 111**. As they are receiving a high number of calls at the moment, the quickest way to do this is online using this link:

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

This link will take you to a page which has further links to an online assessment, advice and answers to many frequently asked questions.

Please note that there is no treatment for corona virus. Some patients however may require additional oxygen or ventilation and need to be admitted to hospital for this. Assessment for admission to hospital due to symptoms related to corona virus is done via 111 not through the GP practice.

Please note, however, that corona virus does not cause chest pain or palpitations. If you have **chest pain, you should ring 999** as usual. If you are breathless but do not have a fever or a new cough, there may be another cause for your breathlessness, and you should contact your GP surgery. You will be offered a phone call in the first instance.



# Routine Appointments

**We are trying to keep the number of patients visiting the GP surgery to a minimum at this time.**

If you have a booked appointment to see a GP or nurse but think that it could be effectively be done via a phone call, please contact the GP practice and ask for a phone call instead.

If you have booked an appointment to see a nurse or a GP at the practice and develop symptoms of a fever and a new cough, please either change your appointment to a phone call or cancel your appointment. Follow the advice above to self-isolate. The appointment can be rebooked for a later date.



# Using the Online Consultation Service

**If you develop a different illness for which you need medical advice, please complete an “e consult”.**

This is an online form which you will find on our website. This form will allow you to enter your symptoms. It will ask you relevant questions and you can then submit the form to the GP practice. The form will be looked and assessed the same day, usually by a GP who knows you and has access to your medical records.

You will then be either given advice or booked into an appointment for a phone call or a face to face assessment. Patients have been successfully using this service for several months now so we are confident it will work very well.

If you do not have access to the internet or do not feel able to complete the online consultation form, please ring the GP practice as usual. The receptionist will then ask you a few questions which will enable the GP to make a decision about what the next step should be for you.



# Visiting Us: Things You Must Do

**The majority of patients are not at risk when they attend the GP practice due to the extensive infection control measures we are taking.**

We would ask that you wash your hands on arrival at the GP practice using the latest hand washing advice. We have turned off the self-check in screen so you will need to book in with the receptionist.

If you are in a high-risk group, you can wait in your car until it is time for your appointment. Please advise the receptionist where you are going to wait.

If you have symptoms that may be corona virus but need to attend the surgery for another reason, you will be given instructions on the telephone about what to do on arrival. Please do not enter the surgery until invited.

We are limiting the number of patients in the waiting room at any one time and spacing the chairs out to reduce risk of transmission in the waiting room.

Please do not bring anyone with you to your appointment unless it is absolutely necessary.



# Carers

If you are currently caring for someone and develop symptoms that may be corona virus, the safest step would be to find someone else to fulfil your caring role whilst you self-isolate for 7 days.

If you are not able to do this, please contact **Care Direct (0345 155 1007)** to see if they can help you.

If Care Direct are not able to help you, you may decide to fulfil your caring role anyway. This is a difficult decision, but you can reduce the risk of transmission by washing your hands frequently and wearing a face mask.

As you can be contagious with the virus before you develop symptoms, you may decide to take these steps anyway.



# High Risk Groups

If you are in a high-risk group, please do not attend the GP practice unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. This group includes all patients over the age of 70, patients who are frail for any reason, patients with other underlying conditions such as diabetes or cancer, patients who are taking medication which suppresses their immune system or undergoing treatment for cancer (chemotherapy and radiotherapy).

If you are asked to attend the GP practice for a non-urgent reason such as having your blood pressure checked, a medication review or your annual review for a chronic disease and you either are currently self-isolating or feel you are in a high-risk group please advise the receptionist of this. You can contact the practice in the future to make routine appointments when the risk in the UK falls to below HIGH.



# High Risk Groups

**If you are in a high risk group and wish to reduce the risk of catching corona virus, you may decide to isolate yourself as much as possible whilst the risk in the UK is high.**

Our advice would be to stay away from public areas, boost your immune system with a balanced diet and regular gentle exercise and wash your hands frequently – after being anywhere public and before touching your face. You may wish to ensure that you have sufficient food in stock to minimise your need to go to the shops.



**We have been advised to continue with our current prescription system. We would ask that patients use EMIS ACCESS if possible, or email [cheritonprescriptions@nhs.net](mailto:cheritonprescriptions@nhs.net)**

We will not be issuing longer prescriptions than we do currently.

If you have not registered for this service, which allows you to order prescriptions online, you can contact the GP practice to ask how to do this.

# Prescriptions



# Other FAQs

## **Travel Insurance:**

If you cancel your holiday, please contact your travel insurance company in the usual way and they will tell you if you are entitled to compensation. If you are, they will send us a form to fill in if necessary. There is no need or benefit to a separate doctors' note and we will not be issuing any. You will be entitled to travel insurance if you cannot travel due to illness or if the FCO advice is not to travel to the area.

## **Further Questions:**

If you have any questions which are not answered on the 111 frequently asked questions, please submit them to us using the e consult service and we will endeavour to answer them on the same day. We will be updating the information in this document daily.

## **Cancellations:**

Our work force are subject to the same advice as the rest of the population. It may therefore be necessary to cancel clinics at short notice if clinicians need to self-isolate.

***We thank you in advance for your patience at this difficult time.***