

Information for patients

# COVID-19 and your planned procedure:

## Important advice for social distancing

**PROUD TO MAKE  
A DIFFERENCE**



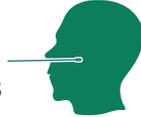
## Before your procedure you will need to do three important things:



**Social distance for 11 days**



**Self isolate for 3 days**



**Complete and return a swab test for COVID-19**

We want to make procedures safe and efficient for as many people as possible. You may have heard of some people needing to self isolate for a longer time before their procedure. Although we are able to reduce the time you need to self-isolate before your procedure, it is still very important that you follow the guidance about strict social distancing.

## Social distancing

You need to follow strict social distancing and hand hygiene measures for **11 days, followed by 3 days of self-isolation**, before your procedure date. Strict social distancing means:

Keep to 2 metres socially distant at all times (if possible even from family members in your household).



Wash your hands frequently and particularly when you have been out of the house.



Avoid large social gatherings, pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes.



Avoid physical contact with others and especially those outside of your household.

**COVID SECURE**



If you are working, follow the government guidance for working in a "covid secure" work place.

Wear a face covering whenever you enter a building that is not your own home.



If you can avoid shops/indoor venues for 14 days that would be ideal. If you have to go to the shops then wear a face covering and use hand sanitiser regularly.



Avoid public transport if possible, if not wear a face covering and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after the journey.



# Self isolation

Your **strict self isolation** should start **3 days** before your procedure (which will be day 11 from when you started following the above advice).

To properly self isolate you should not leave your home for any reason.

You should not have visitors in your home during this time.

Ideally you should not go to work, but we appreciate that isn't possible for everyone.

You should follow strict 2 metre social distancing at all times.

If you have a carer they can come to your home, however the carer must wear appropriate PPE whilst attending to you.



## During your 11 days social distancing and 3 days self isolation you should not:

Remove your mask when speaking to someone from outside your household or when within 2metres of them.



Have physical contact with anyone from outside your household.



Have any contact with anyone with possible COVID-19 symptoms (cough or fever).



## What if one of my household develops symptoms?

If a household contact develops any symptoms of COVID-19 the 14 days before your procedure they should arrange to be tested by phoning 119. The main symptoms are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. You should contact us using the telephone number on your letter.



### You also need to contact us if:

- You are contacted by NHS test and trace.
- You have returned from a country that is on the UK Government quarantine list.

## What happens if I live with other people? Do they need to follow the same guidance too?

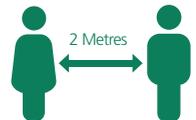
Ideally they should follow the same guidance as you. Household members should work from home if this is possible.



If they are unable to self isolate in the last 3 days with you, they should wear a face covering at work if they are within 2 metres of other co-workers. They should avoid physical contact with others and should wash their hands regularly for 20 seconds.

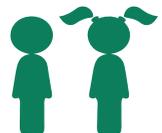


If they are unable to self isolate or wear a mask at work you should avoid close contact with them. This means remaining 2 metres away from them where possible.



## I have children at home, are there special instructions for them?

If you have children please follow this guidance to the best of your ability, though we understand that this may not always be possible.



If you have school-aged children they may still go to school. They should however limit all other non-school activities for the 14 day period.



Nursery aged children should remain at home with the rest of the household.



Older children should try to maintain a distance of 2 metres from you where possible.



## I need to share some facilities with other household members, what advice do you give?

### Bathrooms:

- Do use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, if available. If you have to share the bathroom, regular cleaning will be required.
- You should use separate towels from other household members whenever you dry your hands or after bathing.



### Kitchen and other shared spaces:

- You should avoid using shared spaces such as kitchens whilst others are present.
- Use a dishwasher to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them by hand using detergent and warm water. Dry them thoroughly, using a separate tea towel.



If you are asked to attend other appointments before your procedure, please check if they are absolutely essential. If they are required, please ensure you are provided with a surgical mask to wear throughout the appointment.



# The COVID-19 swab test

It is essential that you complete a swab test 72 hours (3 days) before your procedure. **We cannot carry out your procedure if this is not done.**

## How do I carry out the test?

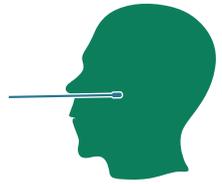
You will have been given a testing pack already. You will have received this either by post or at your face to face pre-op assessment appointment. The kit contains a step by step instruction leaflet to help you do the test.

It is really important that your sample tube is labelled with a printed sticker. If there is no sticker in the pack, please write your details carefully on the tube. You should also ensure that you screw the lid on tightly to avoid the contents from spilling. If this happens the test cannot be carried out.

## What do I do with the swab when it's completed?

Once you have done the test you need to seal the sample tube in the bags provided and arrange for it to be taken by a family member or friend to the laboratories at the Northern General Hospital.

We advise using the Herries Road entrance to the hospital when dropping off the swab. A map of the hospital site can be found on our website <https://publicdocuments.sth.nhs.uk/pil4292>. Laboratory Medicine is at the end of Herries Road Drive on North Lane. Just follow the signs on site. The swab can be dropped off at any time using a designated hatch outside Laboratory Medicine.



## What do I do if I can't get the swab delivered to the hospital?

Please contact us as soon as possible if you are unable to have your swab delivered to the hospital.

We need to know at least 2 full days before you are due to do your swabs. This is so that we can make alternative arrangements.



## What happens if the test is positive?

We will contact you by telephone if the test is positive. You will be advised to follow the government guidance on further self isolation.

You will also be advised about any changes to your procedure.



## What happens if I don't hear from you?

If you do not hear from us it means that your test result is negative, so please come in for your surgery as planned.



## How should I travel to hospital?

Please do not use public transport when you travel to the hospital (or your GP). If you don't have a car, you can be brought to hospital by a trusted family member or friend.



You must sit in the back of the car wearing a surgical face mask at all times and your family member/friend must also wear a face covering.



The windows should be open for all journeys.

## Will I be able to have visitors in hospital?

Unfortunately, you will be unable to have visitors during your hospital stay unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is to prevent the risk of infection.



# Reducing the spread of infection in your home

## Do ✓

Wash your hands with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds and ask others in your household to do this too.



Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and avoid touching your face.



Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.



Clean objects and surfaces you touch often (such as door handles, kettles and phones) using your regular cleaning products.

Minimise the time you spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas. and keep these spaces well ventilated.



Sleep in a different bed where possible.

Clean a shared bathroom each time you use it, for example, by wiping the surfaces you have touched.



## Don't ✗

Do not share towels, including hand towels and tea towels



**If you feel you will be unable to follow any of the instructions, please contact us using the telephone number in the accompanying letter so that we can discuss your options.**

Alternative formats can be available on request. Please email:  
**[sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net](mailto:sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net)**

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