

Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for ADULT patients coming to the hospital

Help Us Help You Stay Safe in Hospital during COVID-19

This leaflet is intended for adult patients who have been invited to attend the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital or one of our other treatment sites. We recognise that you may be worried about coming in for a face-to-face appointment, diagnostic test or treatment. We would urge you to read this leaflet carefully so you can be reassured that we are doing everything we can to help you stay as safe as possible in hospital and so you know what to expect.

These measures help us to significantly reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Your safety, experience and the quality of your care and treatment continue to be our number one priority.

We are continuously monitoring what is happening with during the COVID-19 pandemic. All planned care is subject to developments in the pandemic response and appointments may need to be rescheduled. We apologise if you are affected by this. Information on the changes we are making are available and kept updated on our website here: <https://www.rdemembers.com/coronavirus/>

What to expect

We have taken a number of steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted in our hospital and clinic settings. These include:

- Observing the highest standards of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) including our staff and visitors wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including facemasks
- Operating robust testing processes, as required, for people coming in to hospital – details of any testing requirements will be communicated to you separately
- Isolating patients who test positive for COVID-19 or who are suspected of having the virus
- Advising the recommended physical distancing, wherever possible
- Altering visiting arrangements so we can reduce the amount of people coming into hospital
- Requesting that patients attend the hospital alone, wherever possible
- Suspending patient and visitor access to on site restaurants
- Delivering some services in alternative locations

In line with Government advice, please wear a face covering when attending hospital. For further details and guidance around the use of face coverings, please see the enclosed face covering leaflet.

Please note that, in addition to the above, we are allowing more time between each appointment to enable enhanced cleaning of rooms and equipment where required. This also helps minimise the number of patients sitting together in waiting areas.

If you do need to come in to hospital, you will be required to take steps to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 for your safety and the safety of our staff and other patients.

If you are attending for anything other than an inpatient admission, please ensure you bring sufficient refreshments for your visit, as access to on-site restaurants for patients and visitors has been suspended. If you have been advised your appointment will be several hours you may wish to bring a packed lunch. Additionally, please only bring essential items with you and if you are travelling to the hospital via public transport, remember you will need to wear a face covering.

If you are currently identified as being in a high risk group we will ensure any necessary additional planning and protection measures are put in place. Please talk to your healthcare professional about any concerns you may have.

If you have any specific concerns regarding coming in to Hospital, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS can be contacted Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 4.30pm on telephone number 01392 402093 or via e-mail at rde-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Coming in for an outpatient appointment

Wherever possible, remote appointments are being offered using video or telephone. We are asking patients to attend face-to-face services only when it is necessary. If we do ask you to attend for a face-to-face outpatient appointment, it is because the healthcare professional treating you feels it is important to see you in person.

Please be aware that it may be necessary for you undergo a COVID-19 diagnostic test up to 72 hours prior to attending your appointment. If a test is required, you will be contacted by telephone to arrange a convenient time for this in advance.

Please only attend an outpatient appointment if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19. If you are worried you may have symptoms, please call NHS 111 for advice. You can find out more about coronavirus at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Please only come in to the hospital building at the time of your appointment - please **do not** attend any earlier as we have implemented physical distancing within the waiting areas.

If you need to be driven to your appointment by another person, please ask the driver to remain in their vehicle and not to enter the hospital unless they are a carer who will need to assist you during your visit.

Please be aware you may be asked to remove your face covering for periods of time for certain procedures within the outpatients department.

Hand sanitiser will be available on entrance to the hospital, in the waiting area, communal areas and all clinic rooms. Please use the sanitiser frequently.

Wherever possible, please attend your appointment alone. The only exception for you to be accompanied by one person is if you meet any of the following criteria;

- Children (under 18 years of age) – one parent or guardian
- Anyone with a learning disability or dementia can be accompanied by one family member/companion/carers

- If you have a disability and would not be able to access information or would require assistance during an examination you can be accompanied by one family member/companion/carer

Please contact the booking office on the telephone number contained within your appointment letter prior to your appointment if you have any of the following:

- a fever and/or a new cough
- experienced a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell in the last 10 days
- a member of your household develops COVID-19 symptoms and you are self-isolating as a result
- you or a member of your household has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 10 days
- you have been identified as a contact of COVID-19 through the test and trace process
- you are returning from a country that requires travellers to self-isolate for 14 days

If you have any queries regarding this information relating to your outpatient attendance, or would like to cancel and re-book your appointment, please contact us on the phone number at the top of your appointment letter.

Coming in for a planned admission (including day surgery)

If you are being admitted to hospital, we need you to take extra precautions to minimise the risk presented by COVID-19.

Before your operation or procedure:

For all patients who have a scheduled admission or attendance, physical distancing and hand hygiene measures are advised for the preceding 14 days. In line with government advice you should;

- Wear a face covering when indoors/in confined spaces with other people, excluding in your own home
- Maintain physical distancing between yourself and others outside of your household
- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap & water for 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub

In addition, please note;

- Many consultations prior to your admission will occur by telephone or email
- You may be asked to have a swab test for COVID-19 before your hospital admission or attendance. If a swab test is required you will be asked to attend our drive through testing station at Sandy Park around 48 hours before your attendance. Please **do not** attend the Honiton road government testing station.
- You will receive a phone call to arrange your swab around 72 hours before your attendance.
- After receiving your test we advise you to self-isolate until the point you attend for your treatment. Additionally, we will only contact you to confirm the result if you have tested positive.

- Your operation might be postponed if you test positive to COVID-19 or are unwell with COVID-19 symptoms.

Please only attend for your admission if you do not have any of the following;

- a fever and/or a new cough
- experienced a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell in the last 10 days
- a member of your household develops COVID-19 symptoms and you are self-isolating as a result
- you or a member of your household has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 10 days
- you have been identified as a contact of COVID-19 through the test and trace process
- you are returning from a country that requires travellers to self-isolate for 14 days

Please contact us via the details included in your pre-admission letter if you have any of the above. If you are worried you may have symptoms, please call NHS 111 for advice. You can find out more about coronavirus at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/ Please also make sure you contact us on the same telephone number if someone in your household develops symptoms of COVID-19.

Your operation or procedure

Your operation may not take place on the site that you were expecting - you may be asked to attend the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Heavitree Hospital, Exeter Nuffield Hospital or one of our community sites.

You may not meet your clinician until the day of treatment, and they might not be the ones you expected.

At the moment, due to COVID-19, we have altered our visiting arrangements so you might not be able to have your family and friends visit you whilst you are in hospital.

If you start to show symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive while admitted to hospital, you will be isolated to protect other patients and staff.

After your operation or procedure

You will be discharged from hospital when you are ready, or you may be moved elsewhere to a 'step-down' unit or ward to complete your recovery. Some of your follow-up care may be conducted by telephone.

Discharge

Dependant on your discharge destination, you may need to be tested for COVID-19 before you leave.

**For the latest advice and information
please visit:**

<https://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/>

