

CORONAVIRUS: PATIENT BRIEFING

Summary

- For most patients Coronavirus will be a mild illness
- Self-isolate if mild illness with a fever or cough
- [You can access the most of the up-to-date information via NHS 111](#)
- Contact 111 if deteriorating and you are concerned regarding Coronavirus or 999 if severely unwell
- We are increasing our telephone capacity to be able to provide advice where needed. Patients should call for advice rather than attending the practice without an appointment.
- We are reducing routine face to face work in the practice to avoid well patients coming into contact with patients who may have coronavirus
- We will try to do as many routine reviews via telephone
- All unwell / urgent work will be done at 200 Osborne Road

What is coronavirus and should I be concerned?

A coronavirus is a type of virus. Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild.

What are the signs and symptoms of this new virus?

The symptoms of this new coronavirus (COVID-19) include cough, fever, shortness of breath, or flu-like symptoms.

When should I 'self-isolate'?

Any patient with a fever of 37.8oC and/or a persistent cough (lasting more than 3-4 hours) is advised to assume they have Coronavirus and 'self-isolate' for 1 week. They should contact 111 if they are concerned that they are becoming more unwell. The current advice from NHS England (13/3/20) is that practices shouldn't be assessing patients with presumed Coronavirus face to face.

The practice are not aware of any patients testing positive who have recently visited the Practice. We have a couple of staff members self-isolating as per the above guidance.

Should I attend the practice if I think I have COVID-19?

Please DO NOT attend the practice if you are concerned you have Coronavirus.

The current advice is that patients concerned they have MILD Coronavirus type symptoms should self-isolate. Those who are more unwell should contact 111 either via the telephone OR [via their specific coronavirus portal online](#). Patients with SEVERE illness should contact 999.

Patients who are unwell but **DO NOT** have symptoms suspicious of Coronavirus should contact the practice on 0191 281 4588 and they will be assessed over the phone by a clinician and advised regarding next steps.

If you are unsure what to do please ring the practice and ask for advice rather than attend, potentially putting yourself and others at risk. **The practice cannot test you for coronavirus.**

What is the practice doing about Coronavirus?

The practice team are meeting regularly and being regularly updated by key stakeholders about COVID-19. We will adapt our response based on the latest evidence. We have a number of key priorities:

- We wish to reduce the risk to our patients, their family, their friends and our community
- Ensuring that we have the capacity to advise and assess unwell patients who may have an urgent medical need.
- Keeping our community of patients and our local stakeholders informed.

How are we going to achieve this?

We are making some changes to our systems. These changes are to:

- 1. Increase the capacity within the practice to answer queries from unwell patients.**
We will achieve this by focusing our short-term capacity on urgent care. We will reduce our non-urgent work, redeploy capacity to the on-call team and look to increase the proportion of appointments offered via telephone to patients wishing to avoid attending the practice.
- 2. Reduce the risk of patients being exposed to COVID-19 while visiting the practice by:**
 - Designating 200 Osborne Road as the site where unwell patients are seen.
 - Carry out routine reviews via telephone where possible – any patient requesting a doctor appointment will speak to a GP in a booked telephone appointment first.
 - Postpone non urgent work:
 - Minor surgery/cryotherapy.
 - Spirometry.
 - NHS health checks.
 - For those 'routine' reviews that do need to be carried out face to face, carry out those at 17 Osborne Road. Trying to avoid patients with chronic diseases coming into contact with unwell patients is key to this strategy.
 - Turn off online booking of appointments to prevent an unwell patient accidentally booking an appointment and attending the 'wrong' site.

How can patients help?

The practice is taking these steps to ensure we can provide a safe and responsive to patients who are in need. We appreciate that there will be some disruption to our usual service and we appreciate patients understanding and cooperation at this time. Patients can help themselves, as well as the practice by:

- Keeping up to date with the latest advice via the [practice website](#)/via [NHS 111](#).
- If a patient becomes unwell between booking a routine appointment and attending that appointment, to call the practice/follow current Public Health advice.