

# Coronavirus - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (updated from 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020)

## What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

Stay at home if you have coronavirus symptoms which are either:

- **A high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- **Loss or change to sense of smell**

## What do I do if I have symptoms?

Do not go to a GP Surgery, Pharmacy or Hospital. In the first instance use the NHS111 Coronavirus advice service online - <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> Only telephone 111 if you cannot get help online.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus you will need to stay at home for **10 days**.

If you live with someone who has symptoms, you will need to stay at home for **14 days** from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms.

If you live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days. If you do have to stay at home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible. Read the advice about staying at home by following the link - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

In the event that your symptoms are deteriorating quickly with severe shortness of breath or any other symptoms which normally require a 999 call you must continue to use the emergency service – it is essential you mention to the 999 team that you think you might also have coronavirus.

Many of our patients and clinical staff will contract the virus. Some will, have a mild case of flu like symptoms, some will be very ill with high temperatures and incessant cough and sadly some will be severely unwell requiring medical intervention.

As GPs we advise that you:

- regularly wash your hands with soap and water (please note special, expensive soaps are not needed), keep your household surfaces clean,
- avoid overcrowded environments, maintain social distancing and seek medical advice early on if you have clinical symptoms.
- Wear a face covering

Viruses do not respond to antibiotics and hence no acute treatment to get rid of the virus is available. The main symptoms of high temperature and sometimes a

headache are best treated with paracetamol within the recommended dosage on the packaging.

There is a huge amount of information available online. Some of this is useful but some information is both incorrect and causing panic and fear. As clinicians we are committed to minimising any fear that this virus causes. With this in mind we will produce updates for you as things move forward.

## **Local Covid Alert Level guidance (medium, high, very high)**

The Government has issued [guidance on the new approach to managing outbreaks](#). Every local area will be assigned a Local Covid Alert Level (medium, high, very high) determining the regulations/guidance that will apply in an area.

## **What can I do if I don't have symptoms to minimise the risk?**

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. those who are pregnant

## **For patient Clinically extremely vulnerable (Shielding category)**

Since the introduction of shielding, many new measures have been introduced in our communities, including the rule of 6, COVID-secure workplaces, and the widespread use of face coverings, all of which have reduced the need for such restrictive shielding advice.

In the future, the government will only reintroduce formal shielding advice in the very worst affected local areas and for a limited period of time. This will only apply to some, but not all, Very High Alert Level areas and will be based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

Please check the information on the gov.uk website for more information:

<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>

## **Is the Practice Still Open?**

Yes the Practice is still open, although not for walk in patients, you can attend the practice for a pre-arranged appointment or if invited to do so to collect or drop off samples etc. This is to ensure the safety of the patients attending and the staff.

Please continue to contact us on AskmyGp, if you have not already registered, you can do this via our website: <https://www.boundarysurgery.co.uk/> if you do not have internet access then by phone and you will be asked a series of questions by our clinical support team, if you do not give this information we cannot process your request.

The clinician will deal with your request as appropriate, you will only be offered a face to face appointment if there is an urgent clinical need, otherwise you will be offered a phone/video consultation to minimise the risk of cross-infection to enable our health care team to continue to work and support you.

## **Can I still telephone the Practice?**

As you can imagine we are dealing with an inordinate amount of telephone calls which means there may well be a wait for your call to be answered.

We understand that these are difficult and worrying times and we are genuinely sorry if you are inconvenience by having to wait a bit longer on the phone than you usually would, but please bear with us.

## **Can I still order my medications from the surgeries?**

Yes but, we would prefer if you did this online , via Patient Access, or via AskmyGP or if repeat medication from your nominated pharmacy is ideal.

If you have handed in a **paper request** for medication, please expect a call from one of our clinical support team asking you to nominate a pharmacy for collection, this is how we will process your prescription from now on, if you do not nominate a pharmacy then we will nominate a local one for you, if you refuse then we will be unable to process your request. This is because we are protecting our team and you from a) coming out to drop your script off at the surgery and b) our staff handling paper from outside the surgery.

## **Can I have extra medications as I am self-isolating or just in case I get sick?**

Please **do not ask for medications** that you have not taken for many years or extended periods of medication outside of the current 28 days that we provide on a repeat prescription basis.

Stockpiling, just in case, will be detrimental to the provision of all medications at a time when we need to ensure patients receive their medications as they need them.

## **Should I stop taking my anti-inflammatory medications?**

We are aware that concerns have been raised in France about the use of anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs). Some of these such as Ibuprofen and Aspirin are available over the counter. Others such as Naproxen, Diclofenac, Indometacin, Mefenamic Acid, Meloxicam, Ketoprofen and Celecoxib etc require a prescription.

There appears to be no evidence that NSAIDs increase the chance of acquiring coronavirus but concerns have been raised that taking them whilst you have a coronavirus infection may increase the complications or slow the recovery.

The Government has asked the National Institute for Care and Health Excellence and part of the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency to review the evidence.

In the interim, patients who have confirmed coronavirus or believe they have coronavirus should use Paracetamol in preference to an NSAID.

## **Can I order my Paracetamol from the Practice?**

The demand for Paracetamol on prescription has also increased since the outbreak of Coronavirus. Paracetamol is available over the counter.

## **I've seen on social media that there is an Asthma Rescue Pack available. Can I have one?**

We are aware of social media posts circulating that asthmatics (and even those that aren't), will be issued with Rescue Packs of Amoxicillin and steroids if you call the Practice. This suggestion is incorrect and the decision to use rescue packs is only made after careful evaluation for people with severe (brittle) asthma or severe COPD who are under follow up by a Specialist Respiratory Team.

Please do not contact us asking for rescue packs unless this is something that has previously been agreed with your medical team and careful instruction how to use and when has been provided. That would normally still involve discussion with the medical team where possible before starting.

Asthma UK (do not recommend use of rescue packs as a blanket policy for people with Asthma during the pandemic.

## **Can you provide me with a sick note for my employer?**

Sick notes for COVID isolation will not be issued by the practice.

### **7-14 days**

If you have to self-isolate and you need a note for your employer, then you can obtain this via the NHS website: <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

For non-coronavirus sick notes, please contact the practice via AskmyGP.

## **Can I come in and pick up my correspondence from the Doctor?**

Please do not attend the practice unless invited to do so, we will use a method of choice by you or post out correspondence to patients during this time.

## **Can you provide me with a letter for my insurers to cancel my travel arrangements?**

Unfortunately no. Insurers and travel companies will issue refunds on advice from Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Public Health England, not letters from a GP. We cannot issue holiday cancellation letters for patients choosing not to travel due to the outbreak.