

Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a group of common viruses which are found across the world. COVID-19 emerged in 2019 as a new coronavirus and caused the global pandemic. Symptoms of COVID-19 coronavirus includes fever and a cough. Most people will experience mild symptoms, but some may progress to severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Coronaviruses can cause severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer or chronic lung disease.

What are the symptoms?

Common signs include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, loss of sense of smell and taste. Most symptoms for most people will be mild. In more severe cases infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

How is it spread?

COVID-19 can spread from person to person. When people cough or sneeze and when people touch objects and surfaces that have the virus on them. Not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms, it is important to ensure that you follow the steps below to protect yourself and others.

What can you do to protect yourself and others?

Wash your hands more frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitiser can also be used. On admission you will receive a copy of the Trust's hand hygiene leaflet, if you did not receive one please ask a member of staff for a copy.

While you are a patient you will be asked to wear a face mask if you are able to tolerate one.

Cough or sneeze into a tissue, disposing of the tissue, and then washing your hands.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cleaning is completed within all areas of the Trust, this is in line with national standards. If you have a concern with the cleaning please raise this with a member of staff.

Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces every day, for example counter tops, handles and doorknobs when you are at home is advised.

Why you are being tested?

All inpatients are tested at regular intervals to identify cases of the virus and so limit spread.

When will you be tested?

All patients are tested for COVID-19 on admission to hospital and for certain elective procedures. Further testing will need to be completed during your stay in accordance with National guidance. Testing is on or before the day of your admission, day 3 and day 6, then weekly.

How will you be tested for coronavirus?

A swab is gently rubbed at the back of your mouth, by your throat, and the same swab is then gently inserted into your nostril. The test is painless, though can be uncomfortable but only takes a few seconds. You may require a tissue and some water afterwards.

What happens after you have been tested?

If you are found to be positive for COVID-19 you will be transferred to a single room or nursed with other patients who are also positive (in a cohort bay). You will need to remain isolated or in the cohort bay for 14 days after your positive result. If you are well enough to go home you can be discharged. However, if you have not completed your 14 days isolation while in hospital you will need to complete this at home. The team looking after you will give you information about this when you are discharged. Staff will wear protective equipment when providing care: gloves, aprons, masks, and visors even if you do not have symptoms.

What if you have been in contact with a positive case during your hospital stay?

During your stay every precaution is taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and for you not to come into contact with a positive case. If you have been in contact with a positive case, you will be isolated or cohorted for 14 days. This will not stop you being discharged if you are well enough to go home. If you have not completed your isolation before you are discharged you will need to complete this at home.

How can you help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser as hand sanitisers are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

For infection prevention & control purposes and to keep you safe and well visitors are requested **not** to:

- Visit you if they are unwell or have been unwell in the previous 48 hours.
- Sit on your bed or use the patient toilets.
- Touch your wounds, or any medical devices, drips or catheters.

How can you find out more?

Contact the Infection Prevention & Control Department on:

Stoke Mandeville Hospital Tel: 01296 315337
Public Health England Tel: 0344 225 3861
(option 4, option 1)

NHS Choices Website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

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If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call 01296 315337

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Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.