

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS/PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS

Preparing for elective surgery for children and young people during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Patients preparing for elective surgery must minimise the risks of Coronavirus infection with the following measures. These MUST be taken seriously to give your child the best outcome and keep other patients and staff safe.

For 7 days before coming to hospital for surgery you must reduce your child's risk of catching coronavirus (COVID-19). Developing COVID-19 at the time of surgery could impact on your child's recovery. If the hospital asks your child to attend for treatment or an investigation (e.g. blood test or x-ray) please attend as requested. When you come to the hospital, please keep to the 2 metre social distancing guidance, wear a mask (unless exempt) and practice good hand hygiene. The hospital environment is organised to minimise any potential risk of exposure to COVID-19 at any such visit.

Please note, that failure to adhere to this guidance could result in your child's operation being postponed. Please contact us if you are unable to follow this guidance.

Your child will be required to undertake a coronavirus swab test 48-72 hours before surgery, which must be negative. Testing is taking place at our drive-through facility next to the Emergency Department. If you are unable to drive or no-one that you live with can bring you and your child, you can go in a taxi where you would be required to sit in the back - the taxi must have a perspex screen. Both you and the taxi driver should wear a mask.

Isolate for 7 days before the date of your child's procedure/surgery. This can be by two methods:

1. **Self-isolating with your whole household for 7 days before your child's procedure/surgery.**

This option works well for households where no-one needs to leave the home, for example to go to work or school. Please note that ALL the following steps apply to EVERY member of your household:

- ✓ Everyone in the household stays at home and interacts as usual.
- ✓ Exercise in your garden (if you have one) alone or with your household.
- ✓ Exercise outside your home if you can social distance from people not in your household.
- ✓ Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- ✓ Wipe all touched surfaces frequently.

Do not:

- ✗ Go to work, school or public places – work and schoolwork should be done at home.
- ✗ Go on public transport or use taxis (unless organised by the hospital).
- ✗ Go out to get food and medicine – order it online or by phone, or ask someone to bring it to your home. Ask them to leave it at your door. The NHS Volunteers can help <https://volunteering.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/nhs-volunteer-responders-portal>
- ✗ Have visitors in your home, including friends and family and the people in your bubble – except for people providing essential care.

2. Shielding within your household for 7 days before your child's procedure/surgery

With this option the other members of your household are relatively unaffected but you shield to distance yourself and your child from them. This will reduce your risk of contracting coronavirus from the members of your household who might be going in and out of the home.

You must:

- ✓ Stay at home but keep 2 metres away from the other members of your household, including when cooking, eating, relaxing and, if possible, sleeping.
- ✓ Use separate towels and tea towels.
- ✓ Keep a set of crockery and cutlery for your use only, wash them separately.
- ✓ Ensure the toilet, bathroom and kitchen surfaces are cleaned between uses (if you have 2 toilets or bathrooms, keep one for your use only).
- ✓ Exercise in your garden (if you have one).
- ✓ Exercise outside your home if you can social distance from others.

Do not:

- ✗ Go to work, school or public places – work and schoolwork should be done at home.
- ✗ Go on public transport or use taxis (unless organised by the hospital).
- ✗ Go out to get food and medicine – order it online or by phone, or ask someone to bring it to your home. Ask them to leave it at your door. The NHS Volunteers can help <https://volunteering.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/nhs-volunteer-responders-portal>
- ✗ Have visitors in your home, including friends and family and the people in your bubble – except for people providing essential care.

For both options, everyone in the household should wash their hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds and always when returning home, after using the toilet and before meals. If any member of the household experiences COVID-19 symptoms during the 48-72 hours after having the COVID test, you should contact your surgical team immediately for further advice.

Good hygiene principles

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser.
- Wash your hands after you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, and before you eat or handle food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home.

Reducing the risk of you getting Coronavirus before your child's surgery is the priority right now, so talk to your friends, family and employer about the importance of self-isolating at this time. Make plans with your family and friends on how to manage shopping and childcare.

Coping with isolation

Staying at home may be difficult and frustrating, but there are things that you can do to help make it easier. These include:

- Planning ahead and thinking about what you will need in order to be able to stay at home for the 7 day period, about your child having the swab and surgery, and about any time you may need at home with your child following surgery to aid recovery
- Talking to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need to make your stay at home a success.
- Thinking and planning about how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications that you will need during this period.
- Asking friends or family to drop off anything you need or order supplies online (but make sure these are left outside your home for you to collect).
- Making sure that you keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media.

What are we doing to protect surgical patients during the Coronavirus outbreak?

- Our staff are well trained on how to minimise the spread of infection in our hospitals.
- All patients will be tested for Coronavirus before being admitted and if necessary during their stay.
- We are carrying out regular cleaning of our wards, operating theatres and departments.
- Our staff will be wearing appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) and we have adequate stocks of this.
- We have the right levels of staffing in place so that our patients have a safe, surgical journey.

How can I prepare my child for surgery?

Ensure they eat a healthy, balanced, high protein diet and continue to exercise.

Good nutrition is essential before and after surgery. Help your child to eat more healthily by:

- Eating at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day.
- Aiming for a high protein diet. Examples include eggs, lean meat (chicken and turkey have less fat), cheese, fish, nuts, beans, lentils, spinach, yoghurts, milk, broccoli and avocado. Protein is vital for healing and is important for building up muscle strength before the operation and for maintaining it afterwards.
- Choosing unsaturated oils and spreads. If eaten in small amounts they can reduce cholesterol.
- Reducing sugar, salt and fat. Try to avoid, or at least cut down on these types of foods.

For more information and tips on diet, see:

The NHS eat-well guide

www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/

What will happen before and after my child's surgery?

At the moment we are allowing one parent or carer to attend hospital with your child. We appreciate that there may be times that one parent/carer may need a rest or require food and drinks. We provide parents and carers with a breakfast and also ensure they can have access to hot and cold drinks while on the ward. If a parent/carer wishes to swap with another carer, this can be organised. You can also keep in touch using your mobile phone, should you have one.

We have a fantastic team of play staff who will ensure your child has access to play equipment while on the ward and, where appropriate, provide distraction techniques. All of our toys are rigorously cleaned in line with Trust policy and many of the activities we now provide are for one child only, and they will then be allowed to take this home.

After surgery, we will:

- Encourage your child to do deep breathing and coughing exercises.
- Get your child up and on their feet as soon as possible to build up their strength. This will help to speed up their recovery.
- Ensure that your child's pain is adequately controlled. Depending on the type of surgery they have this could be by using simple painkillers.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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