

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) – 06/08/2020

### Information for patients at Oxford Cancer and Haematology Centre, Churchill Hospital

This document is to provide you with information about how to stay safe from exposure to coronavirus. It also describes some of the changes we have made to our service at the Cancer and Haematology Centre.

We want to reassure you that Oxford University Hospitals is a safe place to come for your care and treatment. We are doing all we can to safeguard our patients and staff. The Churchill site is designated as a COVID-free area. People with COVID-19 are treated in specific wards at the John Radcliffe and Horton hospitals.

The national guidance on COVID-19 changes all the time. **Please keep up to date using the websites listed at the end of this document.** Updates of this document can be found at <http://nssg.oxford-haematology.org.uk/covid19/documents/ouh-covid-19-information.pdf>.

### What to do if you are not well:

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms. A change in smell or taste is also a common side effect of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Please speak to your CNS if you are worried about this.

**If you have these symptoms, or if you feel unwell**, you should **contact Triage** in the usual way on **01865 572 192**. The Triage nurses will ask you extra questions about your risk of exposure to coronavirus. You may be asked to come in to be checked by the team in Triage. Please do not call 111.

### How to stay safe:

You should take the following steps to keep yourself safe.

#### Shielding advice: keep yourself up to date

Until now, the government had advised people with serious underlying health conditions to follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Shielding measures are intended to reduce your risk of exposure to the virus.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, the government advises that shielding is paused for people with serious underlying health conditions. This is because they believe that the infection rate has dropped and it is now safe for the people who were shielding to resume normal activities outside the home. Shielding may be reinstated locally or nationally in future if the infection rate rises. We are not able to write to our patients each time the guidance changes. You should **keep up to date with the latest guidance using Website Link 2** at the end of this document. These sites also provide information about shielding in local lockdown areas.

We know that many of our patients will remain worried about exposure to coronavirus. Many of our patients will have damage to their immune systems as a result of their illness or treatment and will need to take the usual precautions to avoid infection. You should talk to your health care team if you are not sure about your immune system. The following steps will help to keep you safe.

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## Handwashing

Wash your hands properly and often for 20 seconds, using soap and water, and dry them thoroughly. Where available, use sanitiser outside your home, especially as you enter a building and after you have had contact with surfaces. Avoid touching your face and face covering.

## Social distancing

The risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them. The government recommends that you keep two metres away from people outside your house or support bubble. If you cannot keep two metres away, keep the contact as brief as possible.

## Avoid crowded places

You can lower the risks of transmission by reducing the number of people you come into close contact with. For example, avoid peak travel times on public transport and avoid densely crowded places. Small groups in small spaces pose a risk as well as large, close crowds. Your work place should also take steps to keep people safe – see information about going to work below.

## Face coverings

You must wear a face covering at all times on public transport or when attending hospital as a visitor or outpatient. You should also wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas. Wearing a face covering helps to protect you and others and reduces the spread of infection. Face coverings do not replace social distancing or handwashing

It is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and after taking them off. If you are using cloth face coverings ensure they are regularly washed. For more information about face coverings, see Website Link 2 at the end of this document.

## Getting support at home

You should ask friends, family or a support network in your community to help you get food and medicines if you are unable to leave home safely. Volunteer schemes are in place across the country to support local communities. Contact your local council for information about what is available in your area.

You can also get support from the NHS Responder service. NHS Responders are volunteers who can provide help with shopping, getting medicines and transport to hospital. They can also provide regular telephone calls to people who are isolated. For more information see Website Link 3 at the end of this document.

## Maintaining your mental wellbeing

We understand that this may be a worrying time and you may find staying at home and having limited contact difficult and frustrating. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, which can make you feel worse. Simple things you can do to stay mentally and physically active during this time include:

- maintain regular exercise
- spend time doing things you enjoy
- try to eat healthy meals and drink enough water
- avoid smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs
- spend time outdoors, maintaining social distancing

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- talk to someone about your worries
- keep in contact with other people each day.

For more information see Website Link 6 at the end of this document or call the Macmillan helpline.

## Be prepared

It might be useful to have information that someone can find easily should you become ill. This should include your emergency contact and a list of the medications you take. You should have an alternative list of people who can help you with your care if your main carer becomes unwell. If you have an advanced care plan, please include that.

## Preparing for winter

The guidelines on shielding and keeping yourself safe will change over the coming months. You will find the websites with up to date government guidance at the end of this document. However, we would advise that you prepare for the winter months by taking the following steps.

- **Get a flu jab.** You should arrange to have the seasonal flu jab with your GP as soon as it becomes available.
- **Keep other vaccinations up to date, such as the pneumonia vaccine.**
- **Online shopping.** If you have not already done so, register with an online supermarket for delivery of groceries. Try and order your groceries well in advance to ensure you can get a delivery slot.
- **What would you do differently?** Think about how things were when the lockdown happened. Are there things you would do differently if the lockdown were to happen again?

## The workplace

If you can do your job from home you should continue to do so, but you and your employer should discuss and agree working arrangements to best suit the needs of the business.

Your employer is obliged to take steps to make your workplace as safe as possible if you are not able to work from home. If you plan to return to work, you should meet with your manager to conduct a risk assessment. This will consider what sort of work is safe for you. It may be possible to make changes to your usual work to ensure that you avoid unsafe activities.

You might also want to think about the following questions:

- It is possible to maintain social distancing at work?
- Has the workplace made changes to help people work at a safe distance from each other? For example, are there signs to ask people to stay 2 metres apart, or screens in place if people have to work close together? Are there one-way systems in tight spaces?
- Are there sufficient bathroom facilities and how often are they cleaned?
- Will you have access to hand washing facilities or hand sanitiser?
- Will your colleagues be wearing face coverings if they are indoors?
- Does the work environment allow open windows and ventilation?

For more information on COVID safety in the workplace see Website link 7 at the end of this document.

## Keeping you safe at Oxford University Hospitals

### Your appointments

We have reduced the number of people coming to outpatients to help keep you safe. More of our outpatient appointments are now conducted over the telephone or via video consultation instead of face

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to face. In some cases, face to face appointments in the outpatients department will be offered. We will contact you to let you know of any changes to your appointment.

If you are having a telephone or video consultation, this will be scheduled for the same time as your face to face appointment.

### Face masks

All staff and visitors to OUH Hospital sites are required to wear face coverings when they are on site.

Hospital staff wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for contact with patients. This involves a mask, gown and apron.

If you are coming to the Outpatients, Day Treatment Unit or the Radiotherapy department you will be provided with a mask to wear while you are in the department. This is because you will be in close proximity to other people. Your mask can be worn for the duration of your visit.

If you are coming on patient transport please wear your mask home and dispose of it in the rubbish bin, then wash your hands. You will be provided with a mask when leaving the department for your next appointment.

### Visitor restrictions and screening

We have placed strict restrictions on people coming to all of the OUH Hospitals. If someone gives you a lift to hospital for an appointment, **we ask that they do not come into the hospital**. However, if this person is essential in supporting and caring for you then they may attend for the consultation.

There are **restrictions on visitors to hospital wards**. Hospital visiting rules are under regular review. Please visit the OUH website for the latest guidance, or speak to the staff on the ward. All visitors will be screened prior to entry to a ward.

Visitors are not permitted in the Day Treatment Unit. However, you may be able to bring someone with you if you are having your first course of treatment.

All people who come to the outpatients, day unit or radiotherapy departments must answer questions about any potential coronavirus symptoms. They may also have their temperature taken before they are permitted to enter.

### Your treatment

It is safe for you to come and have treatment at our hospitals. We are maintaining our usual service and delivery of treatments for all of our patients.

You will be contacted by your clinical team if there is any proposal to change your treatment schedule.

You should continue to take all of your usual medications unless you are told not to by your doctor or specialist nurse.

### Blood tests

We are now offering blood tests in a different part of the hospital. You should drive to Car Park 4, which is the old entrance to the Churchill Hospital. You should wait in your car when you arrive. Someone will come to assess you and you will be asked to wait in your car until you are called in. Staff will be on hand to give directions. If you are attending the Horton Hospital, please report to reception for directions.

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The service runs Monday to Friday between 8am - 3pm. You can come when you like between these times, but you may need to wait at peak times. You do not need to make an appointment. If someone drives you to hospital for your blood test, they must stay in the car. Wheelchairs will be available should you need one.

### Hospital Pharmacy

The satellite pharmacy on the Churchill site and the Horton pharmacy will continue to supply your medicines. You will be given a slip to hand in, and you can wait in your car, or in a non-crowded place, while your prescription is processed. Have a mobile phone with you if possible. A member of the pharmacy team will phone you when your medicines are ready to collect.

If you have to wait longer than 30 minutes you will be contacted via phone to inform you of the waiting time and given the option to collect later or have a medication delivery through City Sprint courier. If you are having telephone or video appointments, your prescription medicines will be delivered by a City Sprint courier. Healthcare at Home deliveries will not change.

### Other sources of information

**Website link 1:** Government COVID-19 Information for the general public (this is not aimed at extremely vulnerable people):

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

**Website link 2:** Government guidance about: protecting clinically vulnerable people; local lockdown areas; staying safe outside your home:

<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>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

**Website Link 3:** NHS Responder website:

<https://volunteering.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/nhs-volunteer-responders-portal/isolating>

**Website link 4:** NHS Coronavirus COVID-19 Common Questions: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/common-questions/>

**Website link 5:** BBC: How to wash your hands in 20 seconds:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-51754472/coronavirus-how-to-wash-your-hands-in-20-seconds>

**Website link 6:** Guidance regarding your mental health:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

For information about mental health services for patients in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire:

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/news/24-7-mental-health-helpline-replaces-111-in-oxfordshire-and-buckinghamshire/>

**Website Link 7:** Information about making the workplace safe:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/covid-secure.htm>

### Oxfordshire Local Government Help:

For residents in: South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils: **01865 89 78 20** or visit <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/your-health/shielding-vulnerable-patients.htm>

For Oxford City: **01865 24 98 11** or visit <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/communityassistance>

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