



Update 18 May 2020

Coronavirus pandemic: Information for the public about changes to NHS services

To ensure that both our patients and staff remain safe while using NHS services during the current Coronavirus pandemic, there have been changes to the way services are provided.

Please continue to follow Government advice on social distancing, hand washing and work related travel. These updates can be found online at www.gov.uk.

We want to update you about changes we have had to make to NHS services, but we want to reassure you that the NHS is here to help. If you have a medical problem you should contact your GP, NHS 111 as normal or call 999 if it is a life threatening emergency.

To help us continue to provide care and advice, there have been some temporary changes to the way we provide services.

If you think you have covid-19 symptoms. You should always use the NHS 111 online service for advice. If you cannot get online, telephone 111.

You should only call an ambulance in what you think is a life-threatening emergency.

GP services

GP practices are running a service for all patients and if you need to speak to a nurse or doctor, you should call your GP practice or call 111 to book an appointment. In the first instance GPs are holding telephone assessments, in some cases this can also be done through a video online. If your GP needs to see you after this appointment they will arrange this with you.

If you think you have covid-19 symptoms, you should always use the NHS 111 online service for advice. If you cannot get online, telephone 111. Do not go to your GP surgery as this may lead to the virus spreading further, including to practice staff. If you need a GP appointment about another matter, you should stay at home and ring the practice in the first instance.

Special GP-run clinics have been set up in Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster for patients who are experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus and need to see a doctor. If your doctor thinks you need to be seen at one of these locations, they will book an appointment for you.

So our GPs can help as many patients as possible, practices are working together in networks to support each other. It is possible that if you need to see or speak to a



GP, you may be given an appointment with a different doctor or practice to the one you usually see.

Hospitals

Our hospitals are still treating people who have coronavirus, but with fewer patients now in hospital with coronavirus our hospitals are working together to look at how some services can be reopened where it is safe to do so for both patients and staff.

Hospital visitors

To help prevent the spread of infection, we are not currently allowing visitors in our hospitals except under very exceptional circumstances. Visitors will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, including:

- For a patient at end of life
- one regular carer for a patient with additional needs, such as a patient with dementia
- one parent/guardian for a child
- one birth partner.

Emergency care for patients who do not have covid-19 symptoms

Emergency care for patients whose condition is serious but not related to covid-19 continues as normal. In a life threatening emergency, you should call 999 as usual.

Outpatients

To reduce the numbers of people visiting our hospitals we are not offering outpatient appointments except in the most urgent cases. The hospital will contact patients and some follow-up appointments may be by telephone.

How can you help?

We are grateful for your understanding of the pressures on the NHS in this difficult period. The best way in which you can help is to use the telephone and online services if you need medical help. It is important that you do call your GP or 111 if you have a medical concern and in a life threatening emergency call 999.

It is also important for pregnant mothers and those with small children to continue to keep routine appointments and appointments for vaccinations.

Please also continue to follow the public health advice visit www.gov.uk and if you have symptoms of covid-19, you must stay at home for at least seven days. If a member of your household has been infected but you have not been, you should stay at home for 14 days.

Please also follow this advice on how to use NHS services. The NHS 111 online service should be the first place you go for advice. www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19.