

Elective Surgery and Coronavirus

Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust will do everything we can to provide the best possible care during your surgery at this time. However, the Covid-19 pandemic is placing huge demands on the entire health service. This form is to make you aware that your forthcoming surgical care may be affected in many ways.

We must make you aware that:

- Your assessment and care may be disrupted, delayed or performed differently during the pandemic.
- We will do everything we can to perform your operation, keep you safe, and to provide you with information at all stages. We will listen to your concerns and discuss them with you.
- Coming to hospital might increase your chances of contracting Covid-19, or you may already be carrying it when you come for your operation.
- If Covid-19 infection occurs when you have surgery or whilst in hospital, this could make your recovery more difficult, or increase your risk of serious illness, or death.
- You may wish to delay your operation, and we would understand your reasons for this. However future dates for surgery may take much longer than normal to arrange.
- If you suffer from certain chronic medical conditions, it may be considered unsafe to proceed with your elective surgery, and a clinical decision may be made to defer your surgery until a more safe time.

Our normal elective surgical pathways have changed in accordance with guidance from the British Orthopaedic Association, Royal College of Surgeons and Public Health England. These are examples of the ways in which your surgical care may be different from our normal pathways of NHS services:

BEFORE YOUR OPERATION

- Your consultations and advice may be undertaken electronically in a video consultation or via telephone, rather than a usual face to face consultation.
- We may also ask you to email or post medical information to us.
- Your anaesthetic assessment may be via telephone with a nurse and possibly an anaesthetist if needed.
- You will require testing for coronavirus before being admitted for your operation, 2-3 days before your operation.
- Your operation is highly likely to be postponed if you test positive or if you are unwell.

- We will ask you and your household to go into strict isolation for 14 days before a procedure.

SELF ISOLATION

- Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the chance of catching infection from the community while you are awaiting surgery
- If you cannot move other vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible
- Reduce the spread of infection in your home: wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- If you have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms (flu like symptoms, cough, fever, sore throat, muscle aches, loss of sense of smell) please let us know immediately
- Only go outside for health reasons
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home
- Do not meet others, even friends or family.
- You and all household members should remain at home. Do **NOT** go to work, school, or public areas, and do **NOT** use public transport or taxis. If family members need to go out to work consider alternative accommodation for them during your period of self-isolation or if that is not possible consider isolating them in their rooms
- If possible, you should not go out even to buy food or other essentials, and any exercise should be taken within your home.
- If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you will need to ask friends or relatives. Alternatively, you can order medication by phone or online. You can also order your shopping online. Make sure you tell delivery drivers to leave items outside for collection if you order online. The delivery driver should not come into your home.
- Do not invite or allow social visitors, such as other friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone or social media.
- Seek prompt medical attention if your illness or the illness in any household members is worsening. If it's not an emergency, contact NHS 111 online. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. If it is an emergency and you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the call handler or operator that you or your relative have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.
- All routine medical and dental appointments should usually be cancelled while you and the family are staying at home.

TIPS FOR SELF ISOLATION

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

- Plan ahead and think about what you will need in order to be able to stay at home for the 14 days
- Talk 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
- Think about and plan how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications that you will need during this period
- Ask 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
- Make sure that you keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media
- Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have successfully completed a period of staying at home have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films
- Many people find it helpful to plan out the full 14 days, such as on a make-shift calendar. You may also find it helpful to plan in advance what you will do if, for example, someone in the household were to feel ill.

YOUR OPERATION

- Your operation may not take place at Northampton General Hospital. It may be at another location such as the BMI Three Shires Hospital, or Daventry for example.
- There may be transfer of some of your records to other local hospitals, but these will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Circumstances will be very different in the hospital; wards/rooms will be reorganised and staff will be wearing protective equipment.
- You may not meet your surgeon until the day of treatment. Our aim will be that the consultant surgeon who added you to their waiting list will perform your surgery. This may not be possible and you will be offered treatment by another member of the team who has the training/skills to perform the surgery. You would have the option to postpone your procedure until your original consultant is available
- You will not be able to have your family and friends visit whilst in hospital.
- You can choose not to go ahead with your operation for any reason at any stage, if you wish.

AFTER YOUR OPERATION

- You will be discharged from hospital when you are ready.
- We will initially check on your recovery by telephone.
- Follow-up care may again be via an electronic video consultation, telephone or if indicated a face to face consultation.
- It is important to continue self-isolation for a period of up to 14 days following your operation. There are significant risks of catching COVID in the post-operative period if you have had major surgery. This will be discussed with you by your treating consultant.