

Important information for patients coming into hospital for a procedure or surgery

Keeping you and those caring for you safe during your visit to hospital

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

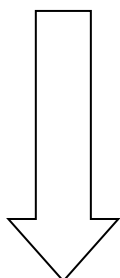
You have been given or sent this leaflet because you are booked in for a procedure or surgery in one of our hospitals. We hope the information will help you to understand all of the measures we are taking to keep our patients and staff safe.

Now that we are beyond the initial peak of Covid-19 infections, we are resuming all of our planned services which has meant some changes to our processes and ways of working.

This leaflet explains exactly what you need to do before your hospital visit and what you can expect when you arrive at hospital. It is important that you read this leaflet in full. If you are unsure of anything or have questions, please ring the phone number on your hospital letter.

Preparing for your procedure or surgery

There are several steps to follow before you can come to hospital for your procedure or surgery. This leaflet will take you through each step in detail and provide advice on how to travel to and from hospital safely when required.



1. Phone or video call assessment with hospital specialist **P4**
2. Preparing to come to hospital, including self-isolation if advised by your consultant or care team **P4**
3. Assessment in hospital (not all patients need this – your consultant or care team will let you know if you need to come in) **P5**
4. Covid-19 screening test at the hospital **P6**
5. The day of your procedure or surgery **P6**

Coming to hospital

If you are asked to come to hospital, please follow these instructions for every visit:

- 1. Complete the Covid-19 checklist** (on page 3).
(This must be done on the same day you are visiting hospital.)
- 2. Ensure you have followed the self-isolation guidance** if you have been asked to do so by your consultant or care team (on page 4).
- 3. Wear a face covering**
(Face coverings can be any fabric, such as a scarf or bandana, and should cover the mouth and nose. More details at www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering).
- 4. Avoid public transport if possible**, and wear a face covering while travelling, whether you use hospital transport, a family car or a taxi.
- 5. Use hand sanitiser or wash your hands when you arrive at the hospital.**



Frequently asked questions:



I was shielding, is it safe to come to hospital?

- If you were shielding or you are a vulnerable person, you may still attend your hospital appointments but please follow the instructions in this leaflet carefully. Please let the department you are visiting know you were shielding or you are a vulnerable person during your phone assessment and when you arrive at the hospital.

Are visitors allowed with me?

- We are sorry but we still need to limit visitors to our hospitals to keep everyone safe. There are exceptional circumstances when visitors will be allowed, including one regular carer for a patient with additional needs, such as dementia. If you think you may need a carer with you, please discuss this with the department before your visit.

Will the hospital be busy?

- When you attend the hospital there will be only a few patients in waiting areas, and public areas have been adapted to support physical distancing.

Will the hospital be cleaned regularly?

- Our staff are undertaking additional, regular cleaning and other infection control measures.

Do you need to physical distance in hospital?

- Yes - please stay at least two metres away from others in public areas whenever possible, even though you are wearing a face covering.

Covid-19 check list








Complete this checklist every time you visit the hospital, whether for an assessment, test or on the day of your procedure.

If you answer **YES** to any of the questions then please **stay at home** and contact the hospital to rearrange the appointment.

If you answer **NO** to all the questions then please attend your appointment as planned.

If you were shielding, make sure you let the clinic or department know.

Today or in the last 14 days...

	Do you have/have you had a fever (>37.8 degrees C)?	Yes	No
	Do you have/have you had any of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, loss of smell or taste, aches and pains, flu-like symptoms, diarrhoea?	Yes	No
	Have you tested positive for Covid-19?	Yes	No
	Have you been contacted by the NHS test and trace service and asked to self-isolate?	Yes	No
	Has anyone in your household or your close contacts had or currently have: fever, cough, sore throat, loss of smell or taste, aches and pains, flu-like symptoms, diarrhoea?	Yes	No
	Has anyone in your household or your close contacts tested positive for Covid-19?	Yes	No
	Has anyone in your household or your close contacts been contacted by the NHS test and trace service and asked to self-isolate?	Yes	No

Preparing for your procedure or surgery

1. Assessment

Your first assessment for your procedure or surgery will be either a telephone or video call with your consultant or care team.



2. Preparing to come to hospital, including self-isolation if required

If you are coming to hospital for a procedure or surgery, we ask that you take extra care in the two weeks before your procedure or surgery. Please follow physical distancing rules (keep a two-metre distance from others), wear a face covering and practise good hand hygiene (wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds each time).



Do I need to self-isolate too?

You do not need to self-isolate before your procedure or surgery unless your consultant or care team asks you to. We are following national guidance on when self isolation is necessary to help ensure you are not infected with Covid-19. We are asking most patients to self-isolate for three days but the time may vary. You may not need to self-isolate at all, for example if you are coming in for a simple x-ray.



You may be advised to self-isolate for longer if you have significant health conditions that may require you to take extra precautions. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your consultant or care team and, if you think you will have difficulty self-isolating, please let them know.

What does self-isolating mean?

Self-isolating means you need to stay at home and avoid contact with anyone inside or outside your home. Your consultant or care team will advise you on whether you need to self-isolate and for how long.

You may want to record the number of days you need to self-isolate here:

Where possible, this means that all members of your household should stay at home during this time as well.

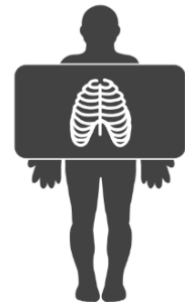
If you live with others, there are some practical steps to take. These are:

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- staying physically apart as much as possible, sleeping in separate rooms and using different bathrooms where possible
 - minimising the amount of time you spend in shared spaces such as the kitchen
 - trying to stay at least two metres (three steps) apart
 - regularly cleaning, with disinfectant, any surfaces you use a lot, such as kitchen counters
 - not using the same towels or crockery and making sure everything has been washed thoroughly before it is used by someone else.

3. Hospital assessment

Some patients may be asked to come to hospital for a specific investigation or assessment before their surgery or procedure. This could include:

- to see the anaesthetist
- to have a test for common infections, such as MRSA
- to have blood tests or x-rays
- to have other specific tests, such as an ECG



If you need to come to hospital, we will explain why. If you are attending for a test or minor procedure, you may be asked by your consultant or care team to self-isolate before you attend.

Please make sure you follow the advice about '**Coming to hospital**' in this leaflet and the instructions on self-isolating if you have been asked by your consultant or care team to do so.

4. Covid-19 testing

About three days before your procedure or surgery, you will be booked to attend for a Covid-19 test.

The test is a simple swab of the tonsils, back of the throat and nose.

When you travel for this appointment, you must wear a face covering and try to avoid public transport.

If you have been asked to self-isolate, you must continue do so after this test until your procedure.

These tests are a priority to ensure you are able to have the procedure or surgery you need. You will be called with your result the day before your procedure. If you test positive, we will delay your procedure and you will need to self-isolate for at least ten days in accordance with government guidance – for more information visit:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate



5. The day of your procedure or surgery



Please make sure you follow all the instructions on page 2, 'Coming to hospital' - this is really important.

You may be asked to use a particular car park and hospital entrance, so please check your clinic letter for details on where to go when you arrive.

Make sure you use the hand sanitiser as you enter the hospital or wash your hands. Please keep on your face covering, in line with government guidance on public spaces. If you are not sure where to go please ask for help or directions from the staff at the hospital entrance or the receptionists.

Please do not go into any other wards or clinical areas other than those you need to visit. If you need to have a carer with you, they should also have been following guidance on preparing for hospital, including self-isolation where required, and you should have discussed with your care team in advance.

When you get to the treatment area you will be greeted by hospital staff who will take your temperature and confirm your Covid-19 check list.

Staying overnight in hospital

If you are staying overnight in hospital following your procedure or surgery, please only bring essentials with you.

On the ward, all beds are spaced out to make sure you are not too close to other patients. The shower and toilet facilities on the ward will be cleaned after each patient use.



If you feel more comfortable doing so, you can choose to wear a face covering while on the ward, unless you have a medical oxygen mask and/or your care team advises you not to wear a face covering for medical reasons.

If at any time you feel anxious about being on the ward, make sure you speak to a member of staff. We are sorry but visitors are only permitted in exceptional circumstances currently. Your next of kin will be able to call the ward to find out how you are and there are other ways that you can keep in touch. Mobile phones and tablets can be used and we offer free premium wifi so, if you have one of these devices, you can bring it with you. On most wards you will also be able to borrow a device – please ask a member of staff on the ward to help. We have a comprehensive inpatient information booklet with more information about your stay. You can find it on our website, <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information/inpatients#Protecting%20our%20patients%20and%20staff> or ask a member of staff on the ward.

When you are ready to go home

We recommend that a friend, carer or family member collects you from the entrance of the hospital. If you need help to get to the entrance to meet them, one of our porters or nursing staff will assist you.



Depending on the nature of your procedure and recovery your consultant or care team may advise you to continue to self-isolate after leaving hospital. This additional period of self-isolation is a precaution as your immune system will be working hard to help your body to recover from the surgery you have had.

If you need any further information about your procedure or surgery, please call the number on your hospital letter.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your experience in hospital, please speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net

The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available in our hospitals. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk