

Coming in for an endoscopy during COVID-19

Working to keep patients safe during the coronavirus pandemic

COVID-19 restrictions are changing in the community but there's no change in our hospitals.

We'd like to share with you the measures we've put in place to ensure you're fully informed and reassured before your procedure as well as supported when you're back at home. We want you to be confident that we're doing everything possible to keep you safe and provide the highest level of care.

Providing reassurance about scheduling your procedure

The first step for you will be a consultation with your Consultant who will discuss with you the benefits and risks of your procedure as part of your shared decision-making, before going ahead with your procedure. This will include consideration of any risk to you from delaying your procedure. If you are in a high-risk group for contracting COVID-19, or if you have serious underlying medical conditions, it may be suggested that your procedure is deferred until later, when it would be safer for you.

Reducing the risks associated with COVID-19

Our patients' safety and wellbeing are always our priority and as a result of COVID-19 we've put in place more enhanced precautions, safety measures and steps. So, while it's not possible to entirely eliminate the risk of contracting COVID-19 we're taking every possible measure to minimise this risk.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and social distancing

Each of our hospitals has made careful arrangements to ensure social distancing is maintained. As you enter the hospital you'll be asked to follow the local arrangements, such as floor markings, to ensure the current national guidance for the gap between individuals is maintained. During your stay you will also see staff wearing the appropriate PPE including gloves, aprons, masks and eye protection. This is for both your, and their, protection.



Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is critical both within the hospital and at home. During your stay you should wash your hands with soap and water frequently, or use the hand sanitiser provided, to help prevent infection. This is particularly important before eating, after using the toilet and after sneezing or coughing into your hands or a tissue. Our staff are dedicated to upholding high standards of hand hygiene and you will see them clean their hands regularly in line with guidelines. Try to avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth at all times as this is how COVID-19 can spread.



Enhanced cleaning

Our housekeeping teams are working tirelessly to ensure that our hospitals are as clean as possible and it is likely you will see them cleaning during your stay. If you have any concerns about cleanliness please raise them; our staff are keen to ensure you are completely confident that they are providing the highest possible levels of care and cleanliness. We would always rather know if you have any concerns so we can address them or provide reassurance.



Visitors

Minimising the number of people entering our hospitals will help us reduce the spread of COVID-19, keeping our patients and staff safe. We are continually reviewing the visiting policy in our sites so please ask us to clarify our position when attending for any procedure or appointment.

Helping you to prepare for your procedure

If you have concerns about the timing of your procedure, it's important that you express your concerns to your Consultant. You might want to ask about:

- the benefits and risks of the procedure
- the risks of contracting COVID-19
- your risk from any pre-existing medical conditions
- the possible side effects of the proposed procedure
- alternative options or no treatment
- advice on your lifestyle patterns that may reduce or change the progress of your condition
- any further treatment after the procedure that will be required and how you will access it.



Consultations

Whether you are having a discussion about a procedure or having your initial pre-operative assessment, this consultation may take place face-to-face, by phone or video call.



Before your procedure

You may be asked to take precautions prior to your procedure, such as self-isolation or COVID-19 swab. Your Consultant or a member of our team will discuss these with you.

NHS Test and Trace



Circle Health Group is supporting NHS Test and Trace in their work to control COVID-19. The results of all COVID-19 swabs are reported to Public Health England (PHE), if positive, then, PHE would inform Test and Trace accordingly for follow up. This is under the Public Health Control of disease act 1984 and the Health and Protection Notification regulations 2010 which require the statutory reporting of COVID-19 results in the interest of public health.

It is not necessary to seek consent from each person for this processing. The processing of your information in this manner is covered by the UK General Data Protection Regulations Article 6 (1) (c) – a legal requirement which we are subject to.

<https://www.bmihealthcare.co.uk/privacy-notice/covid-19-data-protection-statement>

Providing guidance on minimising the risks of your procedure

There are steps you can take yourself to prepare for a procedure and minimise the risk of complications from it, by improving your health and adopting a healthier lifestyle. This can improve the outcomes of your procedure and reduce your recovery time.



Face masks

To help keep you and others safe, please arrive at hospital wearing a medical mask; if you forget or do not have one, we will supply you with one. If you prefer to wear your own face covering, then we will ask you to put one of our medical masks over the top of it. If you are unable to wear a face mask, please let our staff know and they will advise you on the most appropriate measures.



Hand sanitiser

On arrival you will see hand sanitiser that you will be asked to use, and you will also be asked to complete a screening questionnaire so we can assess any risk of COVID-19.



Temperature check

You will also need to have your temperature taken. Once these steps are complete and the screening indicates it is safe to continue with your procedure you can continue with your admission.



Concerns

If there are any concerns, we will discuss these with you in a private area and agree the best way forward for your safety.

Keeping you safe when you are in our hospitals



PPE

When you are in hospital, you will be asked to wear a medical mask or other kind of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and clinical staff will be wearing appropriate PPE, too. Depending on the area of the hospital, this could be a medical mask, face shield, eye protection or a plastic apron. This may mean that the faces of those caring for you will be covered. Please don't let this stop you communicating with staff as you normally would. If you find it difficult to hear or understand what is being said through the PPE, please make staff aware, so that they take this into account and provide alternative ways of communicating with you.



Being dropped off and collected

Someone you live with will need to drop you off at the hospital on the day of your procedure. Please discuss with the hospital before your appointment if you think you need some help or have exceptional circumstances.

We'll monitor you for at least an hour after your endoscopy so it may be helpful to share this with whoever will be collecting you so they can plan for this. When you are ready to go home, they can collect you but they may not be able to come inside the hospital.

A member of the team will advise you on a time of discharge so you can make arrangements to be collected and will support you to make these arrangements.

There may be times when you're asked to refrain from using a mobile phone, and we'd ask that you talk to your nurse and follow their guidance on this matter.

Here to help

Our team is here to help you – before, during and after your stay at one of our sites. We're always happy to listen to any concerns you may have, provide guidance and information you require and support your wellbeing.