



GP services

How you access GP services is changing to help keep patients and staff safe from coronavirus infection.

Dr Reid & Partners

Is my GP practice still open?

Yes, you can still contact your registered GP practice on the usual phone number – **02891 515200**. However, when contacting them, you will undergo an assessment (called triaging) of your needs to determine whether you may or may not have Covid-19 symptoms. Wherever safe and appropriate to do so a member of your practice clinical team will undertake your consultation via telephone or through a video consultation.

If after the initial assessment, your doctor or other clinician feels that you require a face-to-face consultation then this will be arranged.

So that the risk of infection to staff and other patients is minimised and to help slow the spread of the virus, **all patients with Covid-19 symptoms** who require a face-to-face appointment will be required to attend a specific COVID centre in your local area if referred by a GP. You can't access these COVID centres without a GP referral.

If you have an appointment with another service which is usually provided from this building (eg antenatal clinic, baby vaccinations etc) your practice will contact you separately to advise if this appointment will take place.

Will my blood work still take place at my surgery?

Practices are now only undertaking essential bloods in primary care for example drug monitoring – immunosuppressant, DMARDs etc., and chemotherapy, drug safety monitoring – e.g. DOACs, valproate and Warfarin checks. If in doubt if your bloods are essential please ring reception first before coming down to the surgery unnecessarily.

My loved one is in hospital; where will they be discharged to?

Services are working hard to support patients to be discharged from hospital, most people will be discharged straight to their own home, with care where appropriate. For a small number of people this will not be possible, and they may be discharged to a bed based service such as a residential or nursing home. Where appropriate an assessment for longer-term care and support needs will take place at the right time for each person's needs.

Medication

Can I still get my regular medication as normal?

Yes, however if you are self-isolating or have been advised that you are at high risk should you be infected by COVID-19 you should not go to the pharmacy yourself. You should ask someone to collect the medication on your behalf and post this through your door, or leave it outside your door for you to pick up once they have gone.

If you do not have anyone that can collect this on your behalf then contact your pharmacy to ask whether they can deliver your medication direct to your door.

Please ensure you have nominated a pharmacy to collect your prescription and you do not collect your prescription from the surgery.

Repeat prescriptions

If you have a repeat prescription please only order what you need when you need it. This is to help make sure everyone can continue to get the medication they need.

There is currently no shortage of medicines and we need to keep it this way. Only ordering what you need for you or your loved one will reduce waste and help us prevent the unnecessary stockpiling of medicines.

To minimise the risk of infection to patients and staff, we ask can you please order repeat medication via online or our prescription line on **02891 515 226** and **do not** come to the surgery unnecessarily.

I have a respiratory condition; do I need a rescue pack?

We are aware of inaccurate information circulating on social media regarding special 'rescue pack' for people with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Only people who normally have a 'rescue pack' need one. These are only for bacterial infections and not viruses which Covid-19 is.

Please do not contact your or your loved ones GP practice for a rescue pack if it is not necessary. Dealing with these inappropriate non-urgent requests actually detracts GPs away from helping those most in need at this very challenging time for the NHS.

You should continue to manage your condition in the usual way and if you feel you have symptoms of Covid-19, go to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> before doing anything else.

I am a coeliac, will I be able to get gluten free bread and pasta on prescription whilst there is a pandemic?

There are no plans to change the current guidance on prescribing of gluten free products.

Whilst there may be a shortage of some gluten free products in supermarkets at times, as with other products, it is recognised that many coeliac patients can alter their diet to replace bread and pasta with naturally gluten-free foods e.g. rice, potato. If any person is struggling to maintain a gluten free diet during this period they are asked to seek dietary advice from their GP or dietician.

How can my pharmacy help me during the pandemic?

If you do not have anyone that can collect this on your behalf then contact your pharmacy to ask whether they can deliver your medication direct to your door.

By ensuring you have nominated a local pharmacy so that prescription requests can be automatically sent from your GP surgery to the pharmacy of their preference.

Isolation Note

Use this service if you have been told to self-isolate because of coronavirus and you need a note for your employer. GPs will not be doing sicklines for coronavirus related problems.

This service is only for people who:

- have symptoms of coronavirus
- live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus

<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

The government strongly suggests that employers use their discretion around the need for medical evidence for a period of absence where an employee is advised to self-isolate in accordance with Public Health advice being issued by the government.

Am I classed as vulnerable for coronavirus?

In general, those more vulnerable to complications on contracting coronavirus are those patients who are over 70, have underlying long-term conditions, or pregnant women.

If you are eligible to have a flu jab on medical grounds each year, then you are likely classed as vulnerable.

Those classed as vulnerable will not receive any notification from the NHS or from their GP. If you fall into a vulnerable group, you are strongly advised to follow social distancing guidance.

Read official advice on social distancing and protecting vulnerable groups .

<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>

Am I classed as extremely vulnerable for coronavirus?

We are directly contacting those patients who are classed as being at very high risk of severe illness requiring admission to hospital if they were to contract coronavirus. This notification will be in the form of a letter.

Those at extremely high risk will be advised to shield. This is a measure to keep these people safe, and essentially means staying at home at all times, and avoiding any face-to-face contact for at least 12 weeks.

IMPORTANT INFO

We are unable to issue you with a letter for your employer or any other documentary evidence if you do not fall into the extremely vulnerable category.

Read official advice on social distancing and protecting vulnerable groups .

<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>

I want tested for coronavirus!

If you have symptoms of coronavirus then you should self-isolate.

Given significant community spread of coronavirus, you might well have it if you developed symptoms, but unfortunately you will not qualify for testing.

Testing is only being carried out on those sick enough to be admitted to hospital and frontline health care workers.

Your GP **cannot** test you - we do not have any access to any testing and there is no way of telling even if we see you.