

## Information for Patients about self-isolation/shielding prior to admission and after discharge

Your clinical team have asked you to self-isolate for 14 days prior to your procedure. This leaflet gives you further information about what this means.

- You should stay at home for 14 days to reduce exposure to COVID that could be circulating in the community.
- You should also do this for 7 days after your discharge.
- Please try to make sure that whilst you are self-isolating or shielding that you look after your physical and mental well-being. It can be a stressful experience leading up to a surgical procedure, and a self-isolating or shielding period could add to the anxiety around this time. It is important to ensure that you have opportunities to communicate with others, but for this to be done in a way which does not expose you to any additional risk of catching the virus.
- For patients where it may be particularly challenging to self-isolate or shield for this length of time, a shorter duration may be appropriate. If this is the case, please speak to your Consultant or hospital team who will be able to give further advice.

The following are full details for the two options available to patients.

### (a) Self-isolating along with your entire household

What does this mean and when should it be adopted?

- In some cases, it will be preferable for the patient to self-isolate with their household group, meaning that the whole of the household does not leave their home for the agreed period and can continue to interact with one another as normal.
- This is particularly recommended for the case of a child requiring surgery, in which case the parent/carer who will attend hospital with them should certainly self-isolate too. It will often be most straightforward for the family unit to do so, but this too can be challenging if there are adults in the household that work away from home. Each family will need to consider the best way to handle this.
- Self-isolating in this way can also be preferable for household groups where it is not overly onerous for all individuals to remain at home.

What precautions should be taken?

- The whole household should ensure they do not leave the home (but can use the garden if they have one).
- When receiving any deliveries or needing to answer the front door, you should observe social distancing to reduce possible spread of the virus.
- (Please note that 'self-isolation' in the UK Government website is primarily used to refer to households that need to take precautions because one of them *has* the virus. In that circumstance, members of the household can be eligible for sick pay while they are self-isolating. However, an individual that is self-isolating ahead of the surgery date for another member of the household is not currently entitled to sick pay based on our understanding of the guidelines.)

## **(b) Shielding within your household**

What does this mean?

- Here the rest of the household are relatively unaffected, but the individual awaiting surgery 'shields' to distance themselves from others in the home and thereby reduce the risk of infection.

What precautions should be taken?

- The key points below cover the importance of hand hygiene and social distancing for everyone in the household;
- Advice to the patient staying at home:
  - Minimise the time other people living with you spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
  - Keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If you can, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.
  - If you share a toilet and bathroom with others, it's important that they are cleaned every time after use (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with you using the facilities first.
  - If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while they're present. If you can, take your meals back to your room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing-up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If you are using your own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.
  - Everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.

## **Guidance for your journey to the hospital**

- You should not take public transport to arrive at the healthcare setting.
- If you are going to be driven in a car with another member of your household, you may wish to wear a face covering for the journey and/or when getting from the car to your destination in the hospital. There should only be two people in the car; the driver and the person who is being transported to the hospital, and the passenger should sit in the back seat on the side opposite to the driver.
- The hospital will aim to stagger arrival times of patients as much as possible so that the reception and waiting areas are not crowded.
- Some hospitals will be using different entrances for patients attending for Outpatient Apts and those attending for inpatient stays. This will be well signposted, so that you know which entrance to use.
- Hospitals will carefully consider their own buildings, layouts and facilities as to how to ensure social distancing for patients arriving at and being treated in them. They will have considered this carefully, to ensure you are kept as safe as possible.