

Preparing for surgery during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic

- I have advised this patient to self-isolate for 10 days before their planned procedure
- I have advised this patient to self-isolate for 3 days before their planned procedure

Clinician to tick which is appropriate

The Government and NHS England have recommended that urgent elective (planned) surgery should continue to be prioritised wherever possible during the response to the Covid-19 emergency.

At Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals we will do everything we can to provide urgent elective surgery in a timely manner, and restart introduction of non-urgent elective surgery when appropriate. Resuming non elective surgery will be completed by prioritising based on clinical urgency.

Any surgery carries a risk, but if you have Covid-19 either prior to surgery or post-operatively (after the surgery), this can make your recovery more difficult, and increase your risk of serious complications and death. This will be discussed with you by your clinician who will talk to you about the surgery being proposed, risk and benefits of the surgery and also the additional risks should you develop Covid-19.

Planning your surgery:

If your procedure is routine your doctor may recommend a delay depending on national / local Covid case figures / trends. If you have been confirmed to have Covid-19 or are self-isolating due to recent contact with someone who was Covid-19, then elective (planned) surgery will be delayed until you have completed the isolation period.



Please discuss with your Consultant, Nurse Specialist or other members of the clinical team about the balance of risk between waiting until the Covid-19 situation has improved (this could be many months) and going ahead with your procedure now.

You will be contacted by our team who will offer you a date for your surgery, and a pre-operative assessment if you have not already had one. The teams will also explain the new safety procedures in place in relation to the pandemic – which includes self-isolation before surgery and attending for a covid-19 swab test. The clinical team will aim to address any concerns and questions you may have.

Pre-operative assessment

Your pre-op assessment (checking to see if you are ready for surgery), which will take place before your operation will be carried out either by telephone where possible, or by a face-to-face appointment in the hospital. In order to minimise unnecessary visits to the hospital, face to face pre-op assessment may be undertaken directly following your clinic visit (on the same day) and we will aim to ensure that all relevant tests are completed at this point. If you have a telephone assessment you may still need to attend for some investigations, but attendances will be kept to a minimum and support self-isolation.

Pre-operative swab test Covid-19

You will be asked to attend the drive-through swab / phlebotomy service approximately 72 hours (3 days) prior to surgery. This is to undergo your testing for Covid-19 swab of your nose / throat, and also any additional blood tests the clinical team require you to have prior to surgery. You will not need to leave your car for this test. If you are being driven there by someone who is not in your immediate household then you and the car driver should wear face masks / coverings to reduce your risk of developing Covid, as even people with no obvious symptoms can have Covid-19 without knowing.

If you are unable to attend the drive-through facility please inform the pre assessment nurse or if you have no pre assessment the waiting list administration team who contact you with your operation date.

Self-isolation

You may be advised to self-isolate before the day of surgery and the period of self-isolation will be based on:

- Your risk of developing Covid-19
- The risk should you develop Covid-19 in the period following your surgery. This includes your recovery being more difficult, increased risk of serious illness or death.

The clinical team will discuss this with you at the time of your consultation and if you have concerns about being able to do this we have colleagues who can discuss this with you in more detail. The clinical team will be able to make contact with them and will share with you the supporting information for self-isolation.

If you are assessed as High Risk of developing Covid-19 or at high risk should you develop covid-19 following your surgery you will be asked to self-isolate for 10 days prior to your surgery.

Please see the below guidance on self-isolation.

Any members of your immediate household should ensure they follow these key steps to reduce your risks - social distancing, hand hygiene and use of face coverings particularly in the 10 days prior to your surgery.

If you are assessed as being not high risk then you will be advised that you must self-isolate for 3 days before your operation. For the 10 days prior to your surgery it is important that you and your immediate household members follow key steps and social distance from others not in your immediate household, follow strict hand hygiene and continue with the use of face coverings.

Please note that you will only be able to have surgery if you have had a pre admission nose/throat swab that does NOT show Covid-19 and you display no Covid-19 symptoms (temperature, fever, coughing, loss of taste or smell) and you have followed the self-isolation advise based on your risk assessment.

What is self-isolation?

- Do not leave home for any reason (other than a medical care / Covid-19 swab). If you need food or medicine, order them by phone or online, or ask someone else to drop them off at your home. The only reason you may leave your house is to attend the Keepmoat Stadium drive-through service to undergo your testing for the Covid-19 virus.
 - If you are able to ask your employer if you can work from home, alternatively you will need to take time off work during this period of work. If you need a letter for your employer this can be provided either in clinic or as part of your pre-operative assessment.
 - Do not have visitors, such as friends and family in your home who are not part of your house-hold. If you have carers who provide you or a household member with personal / care needs they must adhere to good hand hygiene practices whilst with you and on entering and leaving your home and should also wear a face mask whilst in the property.
 - You can use your garden, if you have one, and any exercise must be taken at home.
 - Separate yourself from other members of your household by:
 - o Minimising as much as possible the time you spend with family members in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
 - o If you share a bathroom, try to use it first or just after it has been cleaned. Clean wash facilities / toilets between different household members.
 - o Do not share items like towels, face cloths or tea towels with other household members.
 - Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser.
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If you have NOT been advised to self-isolate for 10 days before surgery:

- You may still choose to isolate for 10 days, or
- You must self-isolate from the day of having your covid-19 swab which will be 72 hours (3days) before your surgery.
- You and your household should follow the government and NHS guidance on handwashing frequently for 20 seconds each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser.
- Maintain social distancing, and avoid large gatherings of people for the 14 days before surgery where able to.
- Use of face coverings / face masks where possible.

Before surgery:

You will receive a phone call 36 to 24 hours before your surgery to check if anyone in the household has developed symptoms of Covid-19 and that you have followed the relevant self-isolation period specified. If you or any member of your household does have symptoms will need to follow national guidance and isolate for the agreed time period if you. If you have symptoms you will need a negative Covid-19 swab following isolation before your surgery is rescheduled. The clinical team will contact you to explain exactly what to do if you do have symptoms of Covid or if your nose/throat swab shows you have the Covid-19 virus and what this means for your surgery.

If you develop symptoms during your period of pre admission self-isolation you must inform us. What to look out for:

- A high temperature – If you feel hot to touch on your chest or back and/or you have a temperature above 37.8 (if you have access to a thermometer).
 - A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
 - Any loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.
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- If you do develop symptoms please contact 111 for advice. Further information can also be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms>

It is important that you follow this advice to make sure your treatment is as safe as possible.

In the hospital

When arriving at the hospital depending on your admission location (this will be on your admission letter) you should use the following entrances:

Doncaster Royal Infirmary

Theatre Admission Unit – enter via gate 4 and follow signs to TAU (Theatre Assessment Unit) or gate 5 and asked to be dropped off in the renal / children surgical unit carpark or Theatre Admissions Unit car park and follow the signs for Theatre Admissions Unit.

Ward 8 - enter via Gate 1 and the entrance close to Park Hill Hospital.

Alternatively enter via the A&E entrance and follow the signs to Ward 8.

Bassetlaw Hospital

Day Surgery / Theatre Admissions Unit / B5 – Enter via Kilton or Blyth entrance and follow the road around to the Clinical Therapies entrance. Drop off areas are marked outside the entrance and should you require assistance short stay drop off parking will be available.

Mexborough Montagu Hospital

Rockingham day surgery Unit – Please enter via the back of the Mexborough hospital and use the entrance sign posted to Rockingham ward.

**** Please note face masks / coverings should be worn (unless exempt) when you enter the hospital buildings and hand wash / hand sanitising stations utilised****

Theatres / Recovery and Ward areas

We have arranged to treat patients in hospital as normally as possible – however we are taking steps to deliver planned surgery in protected areas. This means that we are keeping patients who have self-isolated away from other patients who may not have done so, as much as possible.

Measures have been taken in the operating theatres and wards to reduce the risk of exposure to the Covid-19 virus for both patients and staff. This includes staff wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including: Face masks and Eye Protectors, Aprons and Gowns and as needed gloves.

We recognise that staff wearing full PPE can be worrying or intimidating, but behind the PPE are our usual friendly and caring staff. Additional cleaning procedures are embedded within the theatre areas to maintain your safety whilst in the theatre environment.

Additional cleaning procedures are in place within the theatre areas to maintain your safety whilst in the theatre environment. If you have any concerns about the cleanliness of the environment or staff processes for hand hygiene or use of PPE during your admission please ask to speak with the department manager or matron.

Contact with family & friends during your hospital stay

During the Covid-19 pandemic we are restricting visitors to patients who have undergone surgery to protect them and other patients in the hospital. However we recognise the importance of keeping in touch with family and friends during your time in hospital and we would encourage the use of electronic devices / phones to keep in touch with family & friends.

We can support you with setting up with planned chats with your family using Trust electronic devices and ward staff will be able to support this should you wish to use it during your admission. Videoing on the hospital premises is not permitted.

In exceptional circumstances the nurse in charge of the ward may support visiting for 1 hour a day by a member of your household who has been following the government Covid-19 guidance on social distancing, hand hygiene and use of face coverings, has no symptoms or Covid-19 and passes the temperature checks that are undertaken for all ward visitors.

****These measures are to help reduce your risk of developing Covid-19 in the period after surgery. If you have any personal support needs please discuss these at pre-operative assessment****

After your surgery:

Your clinical team will tell you how best to look after yourself when you are discharged home after surgery. They will also talk through any concerns you may have and answer your questions. They will also recommend you self-isolate (other than for medical needs) after your surgery if possible and you will be advised of this period this will vary between 3 days and 14 days.

If you are high risk in relation to Covid-19 you will be advised to self-isolate for a longer period following surgery.

Contact details will be provided to you on discharge should you have any concerns relating to your surgery once you are home.

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

The team are available to help with any concerns, complaints or questions you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059

Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net

