

# ADVICE TO PATIENTS

# COVID-19

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# What to do if you have symptoms

The latest advice from the government is to self-isolate if you have symptoms of a high temperature and a new cough.

You do not need to contact your GP to do this. If you do not feel unwell, there is no need to contact your GP.

Advice about self-isolating can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

If you feel unwell or breathless whilst doing normal activities which would not normally cause you to be breathless and have a high fever or a new cough please, **contact 111**. As they are receiving a high number of calls at the moment, the quickest way to do this is online using this link:

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

This link will take you to an online assessment, advice and answers to many frequently asked questions.

Please note that there is no treatment for corona virus. Some patients however may require additional oxygen or ventilation and need to be admitted to hospital for this.

Please note, however, that corona virus does not cause chest pain or palpitations. If you have **chest pain, you should ring 999** as usual. If you are breathless but do not have a fever or a new cough, there may be another cause for your breathlessness, and you should contact your GP surgery. This should be done via eConsult if you have access to the internet.



# Routine Appointments

**We are trying to keep the number of patients visiting the GP surgery to a minimum at this time.**

We are therefore carrying out as many consultations as possible via telephone or video link. You will be told whether your appointment is telephone, video or face-to-face. This decision rests with the GP or the nurse.

If you have a booked face to face appointment to see a nurse or a GP at the practice and develop symptoms of a fever and a new cough, please either change your appointment to a phone call or cancel your appointment. Follow the advice above to self-isolate.

The appointment can be rebooked for a later date.



# Using the Online Consultation Service

**If you develop an illness for which you need medical advice, please complete an “eConsult”.**

This is an online form which you will find on our website. This form will allow you to enter your symptoms. It will ask you relevant questions and you can then submit the form to the GP practice. The form will be looked at, assessed and responded to **on the same day**, usually by a GP who knows you and has access to your medical records.

You will then be either given advice or booked into an appointment for a phone call or a face-to-face assessment.

If you do not have access to the internet or do not feel able to complete the online consultation form, please ring the GP practice as usual. The receptionist will then ask you a few questions which will enable the GP to make a decision about what the next step should be for you.

Our phone system is internet-based and we are experiencing difficulties when there are extremely high call levels so please be patient if you are not able to get through at first.



# Visiting Us: Things You Must Do

**The majority of patients are not at risk when they attend the GP practice due to the extensive infection control measures we are taking.**

Our front door is currently locked. You will only be allowed in if you have a booked face-to-face appointment.

Your temperature will be checked at the door and you will be asked about symptoms of a recent fever or a new or persistent cough. If you have any of these, you will need to wait for a GP to ring you so please bring a mobile with you to your appointment.

You will need to wash your hands on arrival at the GP practice using the latest hand washing advice. We have turned off the self-check-in screen so you will need to book in with the receptionist.

Please do not bring anyone with you to your appointment unless it is absolutely necessary.



# Visiting Us: Things You Must Do

**If you have symptoms that may be corona virus and need to attend the surgery, even if it is for an unrelated reason, you will be given instructions on the telephone about what to do on arrival.**

Please come in a car so that you have somewhere to wait and bring your mobile phone with you. The nurse or GP will carry out some of the consultation by telephone before seeing you.

Please use the toilet before you leave home and wear loose fitting clothes.

An examination may be carried out discretely in your car if appropriate.

You will be given instructions if you are to be brought into the building. Please make sure you follow them carefully.



# Carers

**If you are currently caring for someone and develop symptoms that may be corona virus, the safest step would be to find someone else to fulfil your caring role whilst you self-isolate for 7 days.**

If you are not able to do this, please contact **Care Direct (0345 155 1007)** to see if they can help you.

Details of of the local voluntary organisations who can help can be found here:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus-support-for-communities-and-businesses/community-support-across-mid-devon/>

If Care Direct are not able to help you, you may decide to fulfil your caring role anyway. This is a difficult decision, but you can reduce the risk of transmission by washing your hands frequently and wearing a face mask.

As you can be contagious with the virus before you develop symptoms, you may decide to take these steps anyway.



# High Risk Groups

**If you are in a high-risk group, please do not attend the GP practice unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. This group includes all patients over the age of 70, patients who are frail for any reason, patients with other underlying conditions such as diabetes or cancer, patients who are taking medication which suppresses their immune system or undergoing treatment for cancer (chemotherapy and radiotherapy).**

If you are asked to attend the GP practice for a non-urgent reason such as having your blood pressure checked, a medication review or your annual review for a chronic disease and you either are currently self-isolating or feel you are in a high-risk group, please advise the receptionist of this.



# High Risk Groups

**If you are in a high risk group and wish to reduce the risk of catching corona virus, you may decide to isolate yourself as much as possible whilst the risk in the UK is high, even if you haven't received an official letter advising you that you are in the very high risk group.**

If you do not have a network of friends and family who can help you stay at home please go to [www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable) for advice about help and support in this area or

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus-support-for-communities-and-businesses/community-support-across-mid-devon/>

You should avoid all face to face contact for 12 weeks, except healthcare workers who are providing you with essential care.



# High Risk Groups

If you need an isolation note (a sick note for people who are isolating for any reason and are unable to go to work) but you are otherwise well, you can obtain one from <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

You can do this without contacting your GP.

If you feel you should be in the shielded group but have not received a letter, please submit an eConsult to us explaining your reasons.



# Prescriptions

**We have been advised to continue with our current prescription system.**

**We would ask that patients use *SystemOnline* if possible.**

We will not be issuing longer prescriptions than 28 days in most cases. This is to preserve the supply chain and is a national directive.

If you have not registered for the SystemOnline service, which allows you to order prescriptions online, please contact us for a username and password.



# Thorverton Dispensary Open Mon- Fri 9-12 & 3-6

**If you need to collect medication from the Thorverton Dispensary, please do not enter the building.**

You will need to call out through the door to the dispensers and let them know you are there to collect medication.

They will then leave the medication in a bag on the table for you to pick up.

Please maintain a distance of at least 2 metres between yourself and the dispensers.

Please also maintain a 2 metre distance between yourself and other people who are waiting.

Please bring a card to make a contactless payment if possible.



# Other FAQs

## **Travel Insurance:**

If you cancel your holiday, please contact your travel insurance company in the usual way and they will tell you if you are entitled to compensation. If you are, they will send us a form to fill in if necessary. There is no need or benefit to a separate doctor's note and we will not be issuing any. You will be entitled to travel insurance if you cannot travel due to illness or if the FCO advice is not to travel to the area.

## **Further Questions:**

If you have any questions which are not answered on the 111 frequently asked questions, please submit them to us using the eConsult service and we will endeavour to answer them on the same day. We will be updating the information in this document daily.

## **Cancellations:**

Our work force are subject to the same advice as the rest of the population. It may therefore be necessary to cancel clinics at short notice if clinicians need to self-isolate.

***We thank you in advance for your patience at this difficult time.***