



## **Information and consent for patients undergoing surgery during the COVID-19 pandemic**

### **Why we are writing to you**

Planned surgery at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital had been paused due to the coronavirus pandemic. The RNOH is now able to restart some of these services. You are being invited to come into hospital as your treatment has been prioritised as urgent.

Our aim is to enable you to undergo surgery as safely as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to providing safe care and the safety of patients and staff remains at the forefront of everything we do. However, it is important to let you know that there is increased risk during the pandemic. The journey to and from hospital and time spent in hospital may increase the chance of contracting coronavirus.

There is evidence there is increased risk of developing complications associated with surgery in patients who have coronavirus, but this is difficult to quantify as this is a new disease and there is little medical data on this new disease.

This letter provides you with more information about the increased risks to consider, how we are minimising the risk of infection within our hospitals and what actions you need to take before, during and after your operation. You will get a call from your doctor to discuss this in more detail. Before going ahead with your treatment, you will be asked to sign a consent form confirming that you have read this information, understood it and have had the opportunity to ask any further questions. You can also change your mind. Once you have read the information, if you are happy to proceed with your treatment, we will ask you sign the last page of the form. You may do this on admission to the hospital.

We want to assure you that our priority is delivering your care as safely as possible. The risk of delaying urgent care can be significant. If you decide to delay your treatment, your team will contact you to discuss this with you, and will continue to monitor you.

### **Risks you need to consider**

There is evidence to suggest that there are greater risks associated with surgery in the following circumstances:

- If you have, or are developing, Covid-19 when you come into hospital for your operation or if you catch Covid-19 in the hospital, then your recovery could be prolonged and there is a risk of developing serious illness. This could lead to a prolonged admission, re-admission to hospital, treatment in an intensive care unit or death.
- Your recovery from surgery could be slowed if you catch Covid-19 in the first few months after your operation and may require re-admission to hospital.
- The availability of post-operative therapy and rehabilitation may be more limited than previously.

There is evidence that some risk factors, such as age, ethnicity, and other medical conditions may increase the risk to health from Covid-19. There is presently no single factor which we can point to, and the interaction between all of the risk factors is unclear. If you have particular concerns about your risk from covid-19 (or your procedure more generally) please let us know.

#### **Steps we are taking to keep patients and staff safe in the hospital:**

We are managing the risk of infection to make sure that patients coming into hospital for planned care, and staff working in hospitals, will be safe, as follows:

- We have separated/physically distanced, as much as possible, the facilities where we care for urgent patients in whom we cannot exclude coronavirus, and those patients being treated for planned care. This means some services may be temporarily delivered in different locations.
- Staff working in the hospital will be routinely and regularly tested for coronavirus, even if they are showing no symptoms, and staff who are showing symptoms of coronavirus will be sent home and will self-isolate until they have been tested. This means your planned clinical team may change without us telling you about this in advance.
- Staff that you see on the day of your treatment/procedures/operation will be wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment, which may include a visor or goggles and face mask.

- We are following national guidance for infection prevention and all staff are trained in how to limit the spread of infection in hospitals.
- Hospital theatres, equipment and wards are deep-cleaned regularly.

### **What we are asking patients to do**

In order to minimise the risk of you becoming infected with the coronavirus, and to ensure that we can protect our staff and other patients, we are asking all patients to follow these measures:

- You and all members of your household must self-isolate at home for 14 days before the date of your treatment/procedure/operation. This means not leaving your home for any reason, even to buy food or medicine. It is very important that you follow this step for your own health and the health of hospital staff and other patients. Of course, if you or your family is faced with an unexpected situation that requires you or them to go out to buy medicine or seek medical help, you/they should do but please let us know about this as soon as possible.
- We will contact you to arrange for you to be tested for coronavirus about 72 hours before your treatment/procedure/operation. We will confirm where this will take place and when you will be told your results.
- You must let us know if you think you have symptoms including a high temperature, new continuous cough, or loss or change in your sense of smell or taste. You should also let us know if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus within 14 days of your treatment/procedure/operation. You must also let us know if you have been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace programme, or members of your family have been contacted or displayed symptoms.
- Your operation will not take place if you test positive for coronavirus unless it is very urgent or an emergency.

### **On the day of your treatment/procedure/operation**

- It is important that you do not use public transport to come to hospital for your treatment/ procedure/ operation. We recommend that you come in a private car, taxi or if you are eligible, you can use the hospital patient transport service - telephone: 0800 953 4138. Alternatively, you may be able to get support from volunteers by contacting [www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral](http://www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral) or telephone: 0808 196 338.
- You will be asked a set of routine covid screening questions and have your temperature taken before entering the hospital.

- Face masks – you may be asked to wear a face mask for periods of your treatment or stay.
- You should follow social distancing rules when arriving at the hospital.
- To reduce the risk of infection, we cannot allow visitors so you will not be able to have anyone come with you into the hospital, except in exceptional circumstances.

### **After your treatment/procedure/operation**

We have put steps in place to minimise risk to you following your treatment/procedure/operation:

- You will be tested for coronavirus every week, if you need to stay in the hospital for a prolonged period after your treatment/procedure/operation.
- You and all members of your household must self-isolate for 14 days after you are discharged.
- If you are being discharged to a care home or hospice, we will test you for coronavirus up to 48 hours before you leave the hospital. If the result of the test is positive, the care home will make arrangements to prevent the virus spreading to other residents or staff, following national guidance.
- If you need outpatient appointments following your treatment/procedure/operation, this may now take place over the telephone or via video consultation.

### **Patient enhanced consent**

It is important that you understand that during the pandemic there is increased risk from your treatment/procedure/operation.

The journey to and from hospital and time spent in hospital may increase the chance of contracting coronavirus due to the increased number of contacts encountered. Steps have been put in place to keep contact to a minimum; however, there remains an increased risk of contracting coronavirus.

You should discuss this with your treatment team and make sure that you understand what the risks might be for you. Please feel free to ask us any questions if you are unsure.

**Where to get more information if patients/carers are concerned, worried or have more questions.**

- Call the phone number on the letter sent with the details and date of your treatment/ operation/ procedure. Leave a message and we will aim to reply within 24 hours.
- RNOH PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) – telephone: 0208 909 5439 or email: rnoh.pals@nhs.net
- [www.cpoc.org.uk](http://www.cpoc.org.uk) – “Guidance for patients having an operation during COVID-19”

**Next steps**

If you would like to go ahead with your surgery, you will be asked to sign below indicating that you have read the above information, understood it and have had the opportunity to ask any further questions.

-----

Name of patient

Signature

Date