

Social Distancing explained

We are now advising **all** to employ social distancing to reduce the spread of coronavirus. This includes the following measures;

- Avoid contact with those who have symptoms.
- Only use public transport if it is really essential – if you have to use it, use it at less busy times.
- Work from home if possible.
- Avoid large gatherings, gathering with friends and family – use technology to keep in touch.
- Contact essential services (GP, etc.) by phone/online means.

COVID19 **VULNERABLE** groups includes

- Those who are pregnant.
- Those over 70, regardless of any medical conditions.
- Those adults under 70 who qualify for a flu jab, which means:
 - Long-term respiratory conditions e.g. asthma, COPD,
 - Chronic heart disease e.g. heart attacks, angina, valvular disease
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Chronic neurological conditions
 - Diabetes
 - After a splenectomy/sickle cell disease
 - Weakened immune system: HIV/AIDS, on steroids, having chemo
 - Severe obesity (BMI ≥ 40).

Those in the above groups should employ **SOCIAL DISTANCING** not **Shielding** (see below)

COVID19 **EXTREMELY VULNERABLE** groups includes

People with specific **cancers**:

- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer (which we take to mean chemo for ANY cancer or those with lung cancer undergoing radical radiotherapy).
- Those with haematological (blood) cancers (at any stage of treatment).
- Those having immunotherapy, other antibody treatments or targeted cancer treatments that affect the immune system (e.g. protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors) for cancer.
- Those who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the past 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.

Those with **severe respiratory** conditions including those with cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.

Those with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell (not sickle trait)).

Those on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.

Pregnant women **WITH** significant heart disease.

Only those in the above groups should employ SHIELDING (isolation);

- Stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact.
- Minimise any non-essential contact with others in the household. This means families should not visit except for essential care (washing, feeding, dressing).
- Do not go out shopping, for leisure or for work.
- Essential visits from health professionals may continue, but these people must stay away if they have any symptoms of COVID-19, and anyone entering your home should wash their hands thoroughly on arrival.
- Ensure care providers are told that a client is in the extremely vulnerable group and is 'shielding' so they can apply additional precautions. Think now about who could help if the main carer was unwell/unable to come.
- When deliveries are made to the home, these should be left on the doorstep.
- Keeping in touch with friends/family/work on the phone/internet/social media, rather than face to face.
- Looking after mental wellbeing (see: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>) and <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- Exercise within the home. They can go outside into a garden if it is a private space. If they sit on the doorstep, keep at least 2m from other household members/any neighbours.
- If they need to contact the GP/hospital, do so online or by phone.
- Arrange for medicines to be left on the doorstep.
- Those living in the house do NOT need to follow this guidance, but should follow social distancing advice, even at home, and reduce contact outside the home. ***This means not sharing a bed, using separate towels and avoiding being in shared spaces at the same time as other people.***

ADVICE FOR PATIENTS WITH Asthma and COPD

You should continue your treatment as normal and ensure you are taking your inhalers regularly as prescribed. If you haven't been using your current prescribed inhalers you should restart them. You do not need to increase the use of your inhalers as a precaution or take extra blue inhaler just in case.

Instead follow the self-management advice and any action or management plans previously given by your nurse or doctor.

Unless this is already part of your management plan you do not need to be prescribed a rescue pack to take now as a precaution or to keep at home just in case.

If you already have a rescue pack as part of your ongoing management you should only take this as previously advised by your nurse or doctor i.e. if you have worsening symptoms of your asthma or

COPD. Due to the current Coronavirus situation though we advise you to contact your GP practice prior to starting any rescue pack for review.

Further information on managing your asthma can be found at www.asthma.org.uk

Further information on managing your COPD can be found at www.BLF.org.uk

Further Information

Other useful resources include;

Main advice to patients on NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

The coronavirus symptom checker is available at: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Public Health England 'stay at home' advice to patients:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Advice regarding NSAIDs

[CPhO Ibuprofen anti-inflammatories and Covid-19](#)

Advice Regarding ACE Inhibitors

- https://www.britishcardiosvascularsociety.org/news/ACEi-or-ARB-and-COVID-19#.Xm_GR8MqGdQ.whatsapp
- [https://www.escardio.org/Councils/Council-on-Hypertension-\(CHT\)/News/position-statement-of-the-esc-council-on-hypertension-on-ace-inhibitors-and-ang](https://www.escardio.org/Councils/Council-on-Hypertension-(CHT)/News/position-statement-of-the-esc-council-on-hypertension-on-ace-inhibitors-and-ang)

Pregnancy

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/coronavirus-pregnancy>

If you are unsure which group is most applicable to yourself and require further information please use the Taff Vale practice e-consult service available on our website <https://www.taffvalepractice.co.uk/> . Here you can email us your specific queries and you will get an electronic response by the end of the next working day.

Kind Regards

Taff Vale Practice