

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – information for children, young people and families

We understand that you might be worried about coronavirus – also known as COVID-19 – particularly if your child has a long-term health condition. This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) sets out our advice and the action we are taking to respond to the coronavirus outbreak.

We are following official guidance from the NHS, UK Government and World Health Organisation. The situation is changing constantly so we will update this information as needed – you can always check the GOV.UK website at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> for up to the minute advice.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A: This is a virus that affects the lungs and therefore people's breathing.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: The symptoms are:

- A new, continuous cough
- High temperature
- Difficulty breathing

However, these are similar to lots of other common illnesses. The only way you can be sure if someone has coronavirus is to test them.

If you are concerned, please do not take your child to your doctor or pharmacist – stay at home and call NHS 111 for advice.

Q: Does COVID-19 affect children?

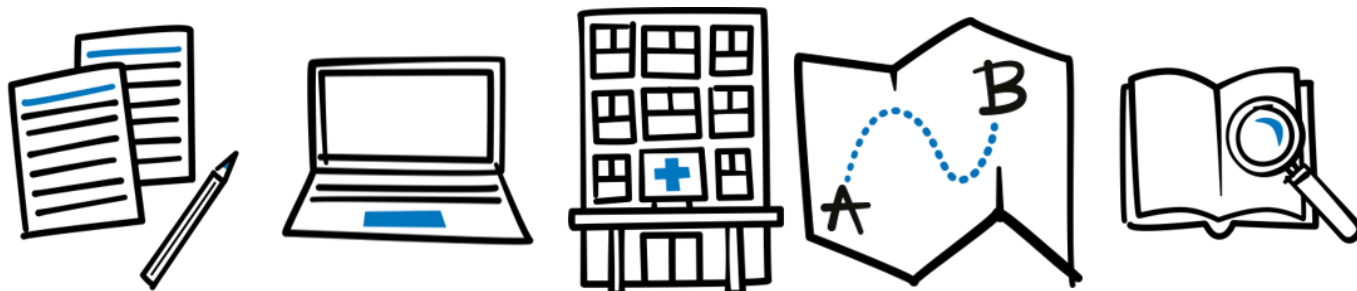
A: The evidence to date (1st April 2020) suggests that although children do develop COVID-19, very few children will develop a severe infection with COVID-19, whether they are immune-compromised or not.

At GOSH, we are taking extra precautions to keep our young patients safe, including providing specialty guidance for patients who may be considered part of a vulnerable group.

Q: My child has a long-term health condition, what should I do?

A: Some of our patients have conditions that mean they could be severely affected by any virus. However, the evidence to date suggests that very few children will develop a severe infection with COVID-19.

We are working with our clinical teams to develop more specific information for children and young people with underlying health problems, in line with advice from national bodies. These will be updated regularly and shared via our website and social media. If you have any questions, please seek advice from the GOSH teams involved in your child's care. An easy and secure way to keep



in touch is the MyGOSH online portal. Find out more at gosh.nhs.uk/your-hospital-visit/mygosh

We also advise that you consult the latest NHS guidance on nhs.uk or call NHS 111.

Please contact us, as you usually would, if there are changes to your child's underlying condition. We will be doing our best to respond to your queries quickly, but this might take a little longer than usual in some cases.

Q: What precautions should we take?

A: You should take widely published precautions to avoid infection, through good personal hygiene with hand washing, not touching eyes, nose and mouth and avoiding unnecessary close contact with people who are unwell. More guidance here nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

As of 24 March 2020, everyone in the UK has been advised to stay at home and only leave the house if absolutely necessary. That means avoiding all public spaces, such as playgrounds, theatres and cinemas. All unnecessary travel should be stopped too. Where you absolutely have to leave the house, you should ensure you stay at least 2 metres away from anyone who isn't part of your household.

The NHS has said this advice is particularly important for those over the age of 70, those with underlying health conditions and pregnant women.

If your child or a member of the family develops symptoms, visit the NHS 111 website, self-isolate everyone in the household for 14 days and let your clinical team know.

Q: Should I stop taking my medication if I develop COVID19?

No, taking your medication is very important and not taking it could make your condition worse. Please consult your specialty team before making any decisions regarding your medication.

Q: Will my child's upcoming appointment or admission be cancelled?

A: To make sure we can deliver urgent care to children from across London, we are postponing all non-essential procedures, appointments and admissions.

Our clinical teams will look carefully at every procedure, admission and appointment we have planned to work out whether we can reschedule it safely.

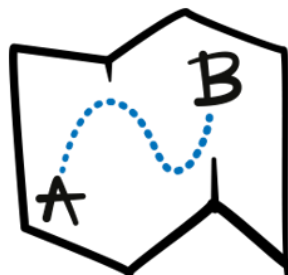
If we do need to postpone your child's procedure, admission or appointment, we will contact you directly. We hope you understand that we may not be able to give you details of the new appointment or admission date just now.

Q: My child has a confirmed appointment or admission coming up, should I come to GOSH or not?

A: If you're experiencing symptoms that concern you or think you may have come into close contact with someone affected by COVID-19, please don't go to your GP practice or come to hospital. Please stay indoors, avoid contact with others and go online to nhs.uk or, if you do not have internet access, ring NHS 111 for advice.

If you are coming to GOSH, only one carer per family will be allowed into the hospital. This must be the same carer each day. Unfortunately, siblings will not be able to visit the hospital. While we understand that these measures will be difficult for families, our priority is the safety of all GOSH patients, families and staff. Limiting visitors will significantly reduce the risk of infection being brought into the hospital. Please consider using phone and video calls to keep in touch with family members instead. If you have symptoms, please nominate an alternative carer to accompany your child.

We know there may be some cases that require more than one carer. For these families, the Nurse in Charge of your clinical specialty will discuss your child's needs directly. If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please contact the PALS team on 020 7829 7862 or pals@gosh.nhs.uk.



Q: What should I expect when I arrive?

A: When you arrive at one of our main entrances, we will ask you to tell us your child's name and ward. Please note: only one adult will be allowed to enter the hospital. Where possible, our GOSH Guides will then take you to the ward or give you directions.

If other family members must travel with you to GOSH, they will need to wait outside. We ask that they stick to social distancing guidelines and stay two metres away from other people in the area.

Q: What are you doing to protect visitors to the hospital?

A: We are taking steps to keep everyone at GOSH as safe as possible. You might notice fewer hospital staff around the building. We have thought very carefully about how many people we need to safely deliver care to our patients, while minimising the number of people in the building. We are also advising staff, patients and families to follow social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

All clinical staff are receiving regular training on how to reduce the risk of passing on the virus within the hospital. This includes when masks should be worn and how cleaning activities should be carried out across the hospital. This is based on the latest national guidance for COVID-19 infection control.

Currently, we are not testing parents, but are routinely testing all inpatients with symptoms. We have clear processes in place to immediately isolate any patients found to be positive, while continuing to deliver expert care and follow strict infection control guidelines. If you or your child have symptoms before you come to GOSH, please do not come in and call your clinical team to discuss alternative arrangements.

Staff who start to show symptoms while they are at work will immediately remove themselves from clinical areas for the safety of their patients. They

will then be tested, before leaving the hospital in the safest way possible.

For key hospital staff who are isolating at home but feel well enough to work, we will arrange rapid testing off site. This will let us make arrangements to bring them back to work safely if they are negative or once they are fully recovered.

Q. How do I get my child's medicines?

A: As we need to restrict people coming to GOSH, we are making arrangements to post your child's medicines to your home via Royal Mail Special Delivery. We will contact you to discuss your child's specific needs and preferences.

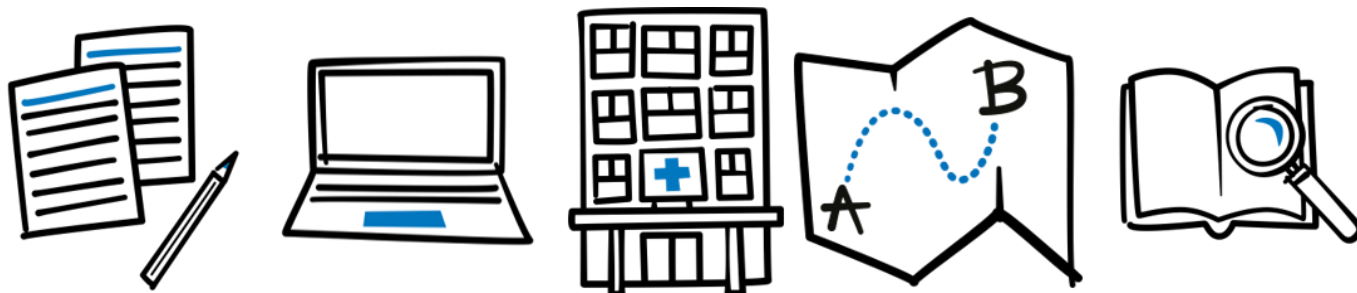
We hope this helps to ensure your child's medicines are not affected in the current situation. As always, make sure you have at least two weeks' supply of regular and long-term medicines. Please do not come to GOSH to collect any medicines. If you have moved home recently, please make sure that we have your current address and contact details. If you have any queries about your child's medicines, please contact your Clinical Nurse Specialist, check the [Electronic Medicines Compendium website](#) or email Medicine.Information@gosh.nhs.uk.

Q: I've been to GOSH recently. Do I need to do anything, given there have been confirmed cases at the hospital?

A: You do not need to take any action unless you are unwell. If you have any symptoms, please stay at home for seven days. If you do not get better after seven days or your symptoms get worse, contact NHS 111 for advice.

Q: Can we drive to GOSH? What about parking?

A: We have arrangements with several local car parks to offer parking at a reduced rate. [Learn more about parking at GOSH here](#) or ask at main reception (open 24/7) when you arrive at the hospital.



You won't have to pay congestion charges or other road user fees in central London, as TFL have temporarily suspended these. See tfl.gov.uk for more information.

Lots of local cafés and shops are closed. How will we get food?

To make sure you have access to hot and cold food all day, our Lagoon café has extended its opening hours and will now be open 7.30am to 11pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 11pm at weekends.

You'll find a selection of main meals to choose from, including Halal and vegetarian options. There are also lighter snacks, fresh fruit and delicious puddings.

Q: What are you doing to protect GOSH staff?

A: We are supporting our staff and carefully following updates in Public Health England advice.

Staff will continue to receive regular updates on PHE guidance, and we may ask staff who do not work directly with children, young people and families to work from home, if their job allows it.

We are also offering support with things like accommodation near the hospital and on-site food provision, to ensure our incredibly hard-working staff can continue to provide world-class care.

You might see some of our staff wearing masks around the hospital. We want to reassure you that all staff are following strict guidelines about when masks should and should not be worn.

Further information and support

Information from the NHS at nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Information for children is available on the BBC Newsround website at bbc.co.uk/newsround

Information from our specialty departments

You can find guidance for specialty departments at the bottom of our FAQ page, where you downloaded this document: <https://gosh.com.kw/news-articles/coronavirus-covid-19-information-children-young-people-and-families>

