

DOCTORnow

Modern medicine • Traditional values

April 2nd 2020

Dear Patient

Please be aware that during this difficult time we are still working to provide essential care to our patients. If you need to speak to one of our doctors at DOCTORnow we can arrange a telephone or video consultation. If you are receiving hospital care, your hospital team will be doing the same.

Wherever possible, we will provide care by phone, email or video consultation. If we decide you need to be seen in person, we will contact you to arrange your visit to the surgery or a visit to your home.

If you need medication, DOCTORnow will be able to post any prescription requests to your home. Please try to allow at least 48 hours notice for any non-urgent requests. The government is helping pharmacies to deliver prescriptions. If you do not currently have your prescriptions collected or delivered, you can arrange this by:

- Asking someone who can pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy, (this is the best option, if possible);
- Contacting your pharmacy to ask them to help you find a volunteer (who will have been ID checked) or to arrange delivery to you
- You may also need to arrange for collection or delivery of hospital specialist medication that is prescribed to you by your hospital care team

VULNERABLE PATIENTS - IMPORTANT ADVICE TO KEEP THOSE AT HIGH RISK SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

Some of our patients will have underlying disease or health conditions, which means if you catch the virus, you may be more likely to be admitted to hospital than others. You might have already received a similar letter from the Government, our apologies for duplicating the information, but we wanted to ensure it was brought to your attention.

Your safety and the continued provision of the care and treatment you need is a priority for DOCTORnow. This letter gives you advice on how to protect yourself and access the care and treatment you need.

The safest course of action is for you to stay at home at all times and avoid all face-to-face contact for at least twelve weeks, except from carers and healthcare workers who you must see as part of your medical care. This will protect you by stopping you from coming into contact with the virus.

If you are in touch with friends, family or a support network in your community who can support you to get food and medicine, follow the advice in this letter. If you are considered vulnerable and do not have contacts who can help support you, go to the [Government Advice](#) or call 0800 0288327, the Government's dedicated helpline.

If you are a vulnerable person who thinks you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, such as a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature (above 37.8 °C), seek clinical advice using the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus service. If you do not have access to the internet, call NHS 111. **Do this as soon as you get symptoms.**

You, or the person you care for, should:

- strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature (above 37.8 °C) and/or a new and continuous cough
- not leave your home
- not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces e.g. family homes, weddings and religious services
- not go out for shopping, leisure or travel. When arranging food or medication deliveries, these should be left at the door to minimise contact
- keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services
- regularly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Ask carers or support workers who visit your home to do the same.
- the rest of your household should support you to stay safe and stringently follow guidance on social distancing, reducing their contact outside the home.

In your home, you should:

- minimise the time you spend with others in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep shared spaces well ventilated
- aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from others and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible
- use separate towels and, if possible, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, or clean the bathroom after every use
- avoid using the kitchen when others are present, take your meals back to your room to eat where possible, and ensure all kitchenware is cleaned thoroughly.
- if the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance, there is no need for them to take the full protective measures to keep you safe. We also advise that:

Carers and support workers who come to your home

Any essential carers or visitors who support you with your everyday needs can continue to visit, unless they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus. All visitors should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, on arrival and often.

It is also a good idea to speak to your carers about what happens if one of them becomes unwell. If you need help with care but you're not sure who to contact please visit the [**Government Advice**](#) site.

Planned hospital appointments

If you are receiving NHS care NHS England have written to your hospital to ask them to review any ongoing care that you have with them. It is possible that some clinics and appointments will be cancelled or postponed. Your hospital or clinic will contact you if any changes need to be made to your care or treatment. Otherwise you should assume your care or treatment is taking place as planned. Please contact your hospital or clinic directly if you have any questions about a specific appointment.

Support with daily living

Please discuss your daily needs during this period of staying at home with carers, family, friends, neighbours or local community groups to see how they can support you. If you do not have anyone who can help you, please visit the [**Government Advice**](#) page.

Urgent medical attention

If you have an urgent medical question relating to your existing medical condition, or the condition of the person you are caring for, please contact DOCTORnow, or your specialist hospital care team, directly. Where possible, you will be supported by phone or video consultation.

To help the NHS provide you with the best care, if you need to go to hospital as a result of catching coronavirus, we ask that you consider preparing a single hospital bag. This should include:

- your emergency contact
- a list of the medications you take (including dose and frequency)
- any information on your planned care appointments
- things you would need for an overnight stay (snacks, pyjamas, toothbrush, medication etc)
- if you have an advanced care plan, please include that

Looking after your mental well-being

We understand that this may be a worrying time and you may find staying at home and having limited contact frustrating. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, which can make you feel worse.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly.

Try spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight. Get out into the garden or sit on your doorstep if you can, keeping a distance of at least 2 metres from others.

You can find additional advice and support from [Every Mind Matters](#) and the [NHS mental health and wellbeing](#) advice website.

Further information on coronavirus, including guidance from Public Health England, can be found on the [nhs.uk](#) and [gov.uk](#) websites.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Brian McGirr', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Brian McGirr