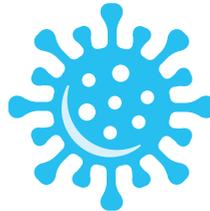


Coming to Leeds Children's Hospital during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Information for parents



Leeds children's
hospital

caring about children

This leaflet explains the changes we've had to make as a Children's Hospital to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, and describes what we are asking of you to help us make our environment safe for everyone.

We hope this leaflet gives you a good explanation of what we are asking of you and why.

What are we asking you to do?

We are asking all parents and families to:

1. Not visit if you are feeling at all unwell, and let us know if you become unwell when you are staying with your child or when you get home after visiting.
2. Wear a mask as much of the time as possible, and definitely all the time when you are away from your child's bedside (even if you are only going to get your child or yourself a drink, or going to the loo). On the Intensive Care and High Dependency Units we will ask you to wear a mask at all times.
3. Wash or gel your hands frequently during the day, and definitely every time you move from your child's bed space or cubicle. You should follow the **7 Step Technique** the nursing staff will have shown you when your child was admitted.
4. Keep to the visiting restrictions the nursing staff will explain to you. It is important to understand that visiting restrictions will change if your child moves between a ward area and an HDU/ICU area, that visiting restrictions might change during the course



of your child's stay depending on the Coronavirus situation, and that visiting restrictions might be different for families from the different areas that our Children's Hospital serves, depending on the Coronavirus situation in your local area.

5. Take a COVID-19 test if we ask you to.
6. Follow government guidelines on social distancing and self isolation when your child is not in the hospital. This obviously includes the whole household staying at home and not receiving any visitors, even family, if anyone in the household has any symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, for the government recommended periods of time, and following any instructions you might receive from the Test and Trace system.
7. If track and trace contact you let us know.
8. Visiting restrictions can't be lifted after surgery and remain as only one parent being on the ward.



Why are we asking you to do this?

We need to explain both how COVID-19 can affect the care we can provide to your child and all the other children we serve, and the special characteristics of this Coronavirus, for you to understand why we are asking you to help us in these ways.

How does COVID-19 affect care?

Fortunately it is extremely rare for children to develop severe COVID-19, but we obviously don't want children to catch it when they are in hospital, both for their own sakes and because we don't want them to take it home to their families (although it does seem that children, particularly

young children, are less likely to catch COVID than adults, and probably less likely to pass it on).

It's also important to realise that if your child has COVID-19, or there is COVID-19 in the family, that will not alter or stop us providing any emergency care that your child needs, but may lead to us postponing non-emergency care (in the same way that your child having a cold and a cough would lead us to postpone non-emergency surgery).

But COVID-19 can affect the care we provide in other ways:

1. We obviously need to keep our staff safe from COVID-19, as you will have read about health care workers getting very sick, and some of our staff have health conditions, or are pregnant.
2. If our staff are exposed to a child or parent who has tested positive for COVID-19, then they will have to self isolate for two weeks. This will reduce our staffing and we may have to close beds.
3. If other parents and patients are exposed to COVID-19 from a child or parent who doesn't know they have Covid yet, we may have to close beds in that area which means we don't have the beds to provide the care we want to.

What is special about this Coronavirus that makes it so difficult to control?

The biggest problem in controlling this virus is that it is infectious even before people start to show symptoms. Some people never have any symptoms, so you could be infectious and spreading the virus without knowing it.



That's why it is important to wear the masks, social distance and frequently wash your hands.



People are most infectious when they have symptoms and in the day before they develop symptoms, that's why it's particularly important you are not in hospital if you have symptoms yourself, and that you let us know and get a test if you develop symptoms shortly after leaving hospital.

The virus can take up to 14 days to show itself after someone has been infected. This means that even if you test negative on admission to hospital, the virus might still be incubating, and you might become positive at any time in the next 14 days. And remember that you will be infectious before you know you are ill.

If you have just been staying in hospital for that whole 14 days, and have had no visitors, and other families and all PPE is worn appropriately, then there shouldn't be a chance of your becoming positive.

If you have had other visitors, particularly if you live in an area which is seeing greater number of cases at the moment, there is a chance that they will have brought the virus with them. This is why we're having to limit visitors, and why it is so important that people shouldn't visit if they are ill in any way at all, and let us know if they fall ill within the few days after visiting.

Studies have found high levels of virus in communal areas, particularly toilets, which is why we're asking for your help to keep them clean.

What are we doing to keep you safe?

All our staff wear face masks at all times except when taking a drink or during break times. This is to reduce the chance of them giving COVID-19 to you, your children, or one another. During break times they sit two metres apart.

We have increased the cleaning of communal ward areas and are asking you for help with this.

We have changed the layout of our outpatient and assessment areas to increase the ability for families to keep two metres away from each other. We have reduced the types of toys we have for children to play with to that they can be quickly cleaned after each use, and, sadly, had to close our playrooms.

We are keeping those patients known to have COVID-19 in a separate ward.

We are asking any parent who develops symptoms or tests positive to go home and swap with another family member out of your household.

We are asking all families to help us reduce the chance of spread as described in this leaflet. Refusal to do so is unacceptable behaviour in the same way as shouting or abusing staff would be.

We are getting up to date information from Public Health England on the transmission numbers in the different areas we serve to ensure that we are responding appropriately.

We are reviewing our policies every week to make sure they are appropriate to the conditions, with an emphasis on trying to do the right thing for the children and families we care for, and recognising that the best thing is for families to be able to visit and carry on their normal lives as soon as this is possible.

Finally, all of these decisions are a balance, and there may be very rare circumstances where we have to make exceptions, such as critically ill children not expected to survive, or parents or children who rely on lip reading for communication, where we have to alter some part of this policy to do the right thing. Please talk to your team, or the matron in charge of your area, if you feel this might apply to you.

Thank you very much for helping us keep everyone safe and continuing to provide good care in these difficult times.





What did you think of your care?
Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



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