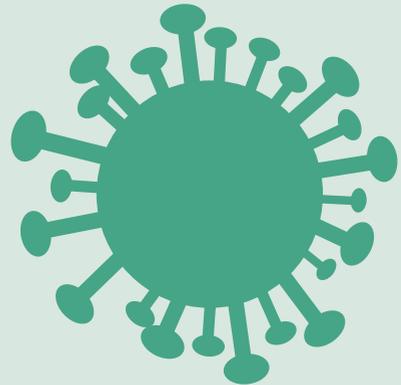
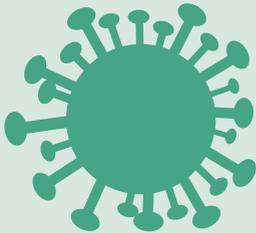
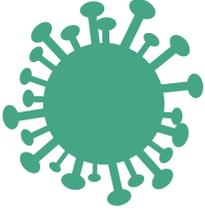


Covid-19 and the Intensive Care Unit

Information for patients





We know that this may be a distressing time for you and your family. We hope that this leaflet will help you to understand:

- What is COVID-19?
- Why you have come to the Intensive Care Unit
- How you will be looked after in the Intensive Care Unit

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new coronavirus that mainly affects the lungs. You can catch it when people with the infection cough or sneeze near you or when you touch something that has had the virus on it. Some of the problems that the virus can cause are:

- Feeling short of breath
- Coughing
- High temperature
- Low oxygen levels
- Loss of sense of taste or smell



It affects people differently. Some people may have none of these problems and some may have all of them. Most people have a mild illness, but those with a more severe form of the illness may need help in hospital, or even in Intensive Care.



Why have I come to the Intensive Care Unit?

The Intensive Care Unit is where we look after people in the hospital that are very unwell and need extra support than can be given on a normal ward.

You have come here because the virus has caused you difficulty breathing or low oxygen levels. In Intensive Care, we can give you additional support to help with your breathing.

Intensive Care is not the right place for everybody. After talking to you, we think that you could be helped by at least some of the care that we offer.

What will happen whilst I am in Intensive Care?

You will be looked after by a dedicated and experienced team for 24 hours a day. Our team includes, nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, dieticians, pharmacists and many more. The team now have a lot of experience in treating COVID-19.

Monitors

You will be monitored continuously whilst you are in Intensive Care, so that we can notice any changes right away. You may have a cuff around your arm to measure your blood pressure, stickers on your chest to look at your heart and a probe on your finger to measure your oxygen levels. These will be attached to a screen that show us this information. The screens have flashing lights and loud alarms. These are to draw our attention and should not worry you. It is often as simple as a sticker has fallen off! Your bedside nurse will talk through any concerns you may have or reassure you.

Drips

You may need a number of drips going into your veins or arteries whilst you are in Intensive Care, which will usually be in your hand or arm. These help us to give you medicines, fluids and take blood tests from you if needed.

Oxygen

Oxygen is the main treatment that we will give you. There are a number of different ways that it can be given, depending on the amount of oxygen you need and your comfort. These include through little tubes in your nose, loose fitting face masks, tight fitting face masks or an oxygen hood (see image below). The latter two are what we call CPAP. CPAP can feel unusual or uncomfortable at first, but can often help your breathing the most. CPAP has been likened to breathing with your head out of the window of a fast-moving car!



CPAP hood



You might be given medicines to help make you better. The doctors and pharmacists will check that they are suitable and safe for you:

Dexamethasone

This is a type of steroid that can be given as either a tablet or injection, to reduce the inflammation in your lungs from the virus. This is being used all over the world to help patients with COVID-19.

Remdesivir

This is a medicine that we use to treat some viral infections. Some big studies suggest that it may make your illness less severe.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics treat bacteria, so will have no effect on COVID-19 as it is a virus. However, when you are weak, you are more likely to suffer from bacterial infections, so we may also give some people antibiotics.

You might experience:

Proning - This is where you lie on your stomach for a few hours at a time. This can help to improve your oxygen levels. You can do this by yourself or we can help you to if you struggle.

Food and drink

Food is important to help you fight off infections, especially when you are poorly. If you are finding it hard to eat and drink because you feel breathless, we can help you and give you extra energy drinks. If you are still finding it difficult we can offer you a small feeding tube that goes through your nose into your stomach, to help you get enough nutrition.

Why have I been asked to be part of a research study?

We are still trying to find more ways to treat COVID-19 and the only way we can do this is by asking patients to take part in research studies. You may be asked to take part in a study that involves receiving a new type of treatment if we think that it would be suitable for you. If you agree, you will meet our research team and you will be given all of the information about that particular study. All of the studies are part of national and international research trials and all of the treatments that you may be given have already been checked for safety. You do not have to be part of a research study and your treatment will not change if you do not want to take part.



What if I become more unwell?

If you were to become more unwell then there is the option to put you to sleep and let a specialist machine take over your breathing. This is called a ventilator. You may have seen this happen to other patients around you. We understand that this can be scary for you.

This treatment is not the best treatment for everyone. A doctor will talk to you about whether or not this would be best for you and you can tell us your wishes. We will discuss these options with your loved ones if you would prefer.

Can I have visitors?

Sadly, no visitors are allowed on Intensive Care. This rule is to stop the spread of the virus. We can help you arrange phone calls and video calls with your loved ones, or if you would prefer, we will keep them updated regularly.

Spiritual support

If you would like spiritual support you can talk to somebody from our religious services at the hospital. Let our staff know if this is something you would like.

What happens when I leave Intensive Care?

When you are better enough to not need the specialist treatment that we offer in Intensive Care, you will move to a hospital ward. You might still need oxygen and you will be checked up on by our Intensive Care outreach team.

It can take a long time for your body to recover and you may feel very weak. Unfortunately, we cannot say how long this will take as it varies between individuals, but it may take many months. Our rehabilitation team of nurses and physiotherapists will see you on the ward and help build up your strength if needed.

The Intensive Care Unit can be a scary place, and during your time here you may be very ill, or see other patients very ill. This can be difficult to come to terms with, and the rehabilitation team will talk to you about this. We can help you get some counselling if you need, or give you information for the future should you want to think about it.

Several months after you leave hospital, you will be invited to our follow-up clinic if you want. This is an opportunity to talk through your experience, and we can offer extra support then if needed.

We hope this information has been helpful for you. If you have any questions, please ask any of the team and they will be happy to help.

Information for visitors

At our hospitals

To maintain the safety of our patients and staff it is very important that the number of people on our hospital sites and in our departments at any one time is very low.

Social distancing must be maintained by patients, visitors, and staff at all times. Sometimes this is difficult to achieve. There are some actions you can take to help.



- Please keep to the left when walking along our corridors
- Please walk in single file if you are able
- Please comply with social distancing signs and floor markings
- Please follow one way routes when directed to do so by staff

2M ↑↑↑

**PLEASE DO NOT CROSS THIS LINE
KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE**

↑↑↑ 2M

Shielding

Some people are clinically extremely vulnerable and are at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus. If you or anyone in your household has received a letter recommending shielding or have been told to shield by your GP or hospital clinician, please do not visit the hospital unless you have to.

NHS Volunteer Responders

If you need some help while you are shielding or self-isolating, NHS Volunteers Responders can help you with daily tasks such as collecting your shopping or prescriptions, or they can call you for a friendly chat.

Please call **0808 196 3646** any time between 8am-8pm
or visit www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk

Face coverings

Face coverings do not replace the need to follow social distancing rules but may prevent you passing on coronavirus before you have symptoms.

If you have your own face covering, you must wear this when visiting the hospital. If you do not have a face covering, one will be provided for you when entering the hospital. Thank you for your cooperation with this.

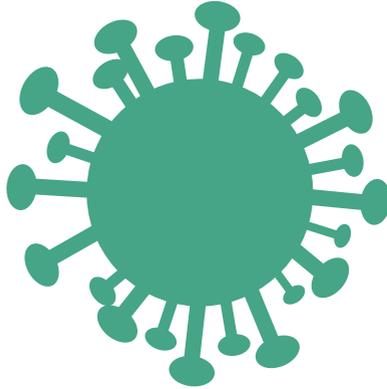
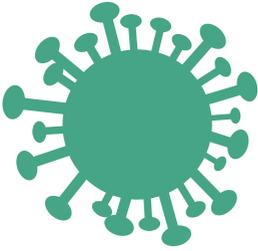
A cloth face covering should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head. When wearing a face covering, take care to tuck away any loose ends.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting it on and after taking it off. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth at all times and store used face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them.

Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with your mouth and nose. Once removed, make sure you clean any surfaces the face covering has touched.

You should wash a face covering regularly. It can go in with other laundry, using your normal detergent. Information on how to make your own face covering may be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering





What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



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