



Coronavirus – (COVID 19)

Patient Newsletter March 2020

05 04 2020

Useful contacts

111: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

NHS England: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Public health: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>

East and North Herts CCG: <https://www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/news>

Herts County Council:
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/emergencies/coronavirus>

111: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Letters to *At Risk* patients

We have been informed that patients who are to receive letters requesting they isolate for 12 weeks have now been received by patients. If you have not had this letter and believe you are immune-compromised or at greater risk than others you should isolate yourself and seek guidance from the 111 web site tool. Any patient who is unsure if they should shield or not who has checked all the online advice and remains unsure should shield until they have sought specialist advice either from their treating consultant or the practice.

Should you need further guidance in relation to a specific condition then please seek advice from your consultant in the first instance.

Thank you to everyone who has been a source of support for our team in these difficult weeks. I have heard many tales of kindness toward the team in these very difficult times.

Please do remember many of this team are working long hours and placing themselves at risk to deliver services to you at this time. They do it because they want to help. Please allow them to by listening carefully to them and asking if you are confused or unsure. At times they may not have an answer as this scenario is new to everyone and the advice is changing for us daily.

Thank you for letting us help you and for being patient with us while we deal with such a high volume of contact.

Ordering Repeat Prescriptions

Wallace House Surgery are following the advice of NHS England in ensuring we are supplying medications in a safe and effective way. Any requests for prescriptions to be prescribed earlier cannot be honoured. NHS England has stated that in order to avoid disruption to the supply of medications we should prescribe prescriptions every 28 days as standard. This will avoid any stock shortages and allow local pharmacies to process prescriptions ensuring all patients get their prescriptions safely and in a timely manner. Please respect our colleagues within the wider NHS team to allow everyone to work as safely as possible.

Digital isolation note for patients now available online

To reduce the burden on GP practices a new online system, created by the NHS and the Department for Work and Pensions, is now live for patients to be emailed a digital isolation note. Isolation notes provide patients with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus, either because they have symptoms or they live with someone who has symptoms, and so cannot work. As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes. The notes can be accessed through the NHS website and NHS 111 online. After answering a few questions, an isolation note will be emailed to the user. If they don't have an email address, they can have the note sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer. The service can also be used to generate an isolation note on behalf of someone else.

Interested in volunteering to help the NHS?

How can people volunteer?

The process for volunteers is:

- Register on the NHS Volunteer Responders page.
- Complete your details and identify which volunteer roles you are interested in.
- Once your registration and checks are complete you will be emailed a verification code and log-in details.

- Download the GoodSAM Responders app and log in.
- Switch on the app when you're available for volunteering jobs.

Shielding letters

We have received a huge number of queries in relation to the Government shielding scheme for the most vulnerable members of our community. These queries will take us a while to go through. If you have received a letter already and need further advice please first take a look at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

If you believe that you ought to be shielding due to being high risk of complications from corona virus please do not hesitate to call us and please adhere to the shielding guidance until you have heard back from us regarding your enquiry.

Guidance on how to shield can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875126/Easy_read_guidance_on_shielding_March_2020.pdf

If you are unsure if you should have received a letter and cannot find the advice you need online, then please do call our team and a request will be made for a GP to review your notes. This work is important but will require dedicated time from our GP team so please do check the guidance documentation online first if you are able. If you are in any doubt if you may be at risk then please do follow the extreme isolation advice until you have got clarity.

The advice to stay at home and remain protected and protect others is paramount at this time.

Thank you

So far, many of the patients we have dealt with have been very understanding of the pressure our team is currently under. We would like to thank everyone for the patience and kindness they have shown toward the team at this time.

We do understand what an anxious time this is for everyone.

We thought it might be nice to share some of the work we have done in the team to support the national response to Corona Virus;

- called all patients over 90 years old to check they understand how to stay safe and protected

- issue personalised guidance to all patients who we believe fit into at risk groups following on from the government shielding strategy
- offer support to the local teams looking to set up new response hubs in Hertford
- answered all incoming calls
- completed all outstanding referral work
- continued with all routine and urgent prescription requests
- supported isolating team members
- redesigned our services to free up nurses and GP to phone patients with routine and urgent queries
- worked to support over 200 patients in residential care locally with continued care
- introduced the technology to support video consultations
- supported national work to ensure patients records are appropriately shared to other healthcare organisations
- adapted to the many changes in legislation around the way we will work with other organisation in the future
- over 70 % of our team have offered to work additional hours to cover sick or isolated colleagues
- Many of our team have placed their children into emergency keyworker childcare to allow them to attend work and continue to serve the public at this time

The partners would like to publically commend and thank the team for their exceptional response to the pandemic.