

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. You can find [guidance for specific patient groups here](#).

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 your child has symptoms of COVID-19, please do not take them to your doctor or pharmacist – stay at home and use the NHS 111 online service at 111.nhs.uk for urgent medical advice.

If you are due to attend GOSH and you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19, please call their speciality team for advice and support for before visiting the hospital.

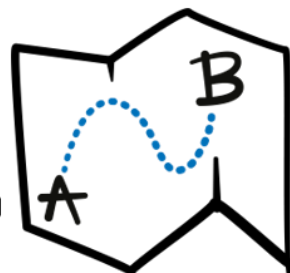
Q: Does COVID-19 affect children?

A: The evidence to date (9th April 2020) suggests that although children do develop COVID-19, very few children develop severe symptoms with COVID-19, even if they have an underlying health condition.

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

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

A: 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. You can find guidance for specific patient groups at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-specialty-guides. 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. Please also consult the latest NHS guidance at nhs.uk.

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

You can also call NHS 111 for medical advice, 24 hours a day. However, if you are very worried about your child – they are seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk – you should always call 999 or go to your local A&E or urgent care centre.

Q: What precautions should we take?

A: Everyone 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 you are an adult who has been identified as being at high clinical risk from COVID-19, you should follow the [shielding guidance on the NHS website](#).

If your child has been identified as being at high clinical risk from COVID-19, you can read special shielding advice from GOSH at [gosh.nhs.uk/covid-](https://gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-and-vulnerable-children)

[19-and-vulnerable-children](#). This provides practical advice on what shielding means for your child and your family.

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

Q: Should my child stop taking their medication if they develop COVID19?

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

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

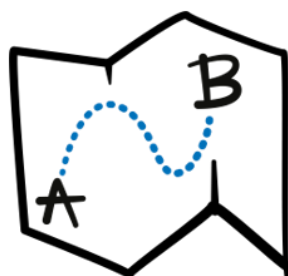
A: To make sure we can deliver urgent care to children from across London, we are postponing all non-essential procedures, appointments and admissions.

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 are due to attend GOSH and you or your child is experiencing symptoms that concern you, or think you may have come into close contact with someone affected by COVID-19, please call your child's speciality team for support for before visiting the hospital. Please do not go to your GP practice. Stay indoors, avoid contact with others, and visit the NHS 111 online at 111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111 for urgent medical advice.



If it's safe for you and your child to come 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.

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 you're worried about your upcoming trip to GOSH, please contact the PALS team on 020 7829 7862 or pals@gosh.nhs.uk.

Q: What should we expect when we 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 and handwashing guidelines wherever possible.

You will also notice staff wearing various types of personal protective equipment (PPE), like mask

and aprons. They are receiving regular training on how to reduce the risk of passing on the virus within the hospital, including when masks and other types of PPE 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.

Q: What about testing?

A: 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 for advice and support.

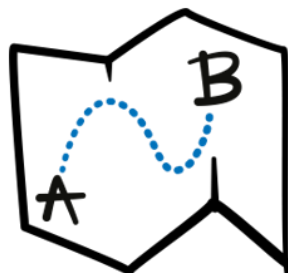
Staff who start to show symptoms while they are at work will immediately remove themselves from clinical areas for the safety of their patients. They will then be tested, before leaving the hospital in the safest way possible.

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, visit 111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111 for urgent medical 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 Transport for London (TFL) have temporarily suspended these. See tfl.gov.uk for more information.

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

A: 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: Will the play team still be here to support my child during our appointment, procedure or admission?

A: Play is an essential part of the support provided to patients at GOSH, and the hospital's dedicated

Play team will continue to work with patients at the hospital during this time, while following all the infection control guidelines that are in place. As part of this, we have taken the decision to close the ward play rooms, but have a variety of ways patients can still access play services.

The Play team have prepared activity packs including single use crafts, protected in sealed bags, for patients and their carer to use in their own room or bay. Play Specialist support for distraction is available as well as a range of sensory toys that are soothing.

If you have any questions about how to access the support of our Play team, please check the sign on the ward's play room door, speak to your ward's Play Specialist, or ask the Nurse in Charge.

Q: Is the GOSH school open?

A: In line with government guidance, there will be no teaching in our schoolrooms or on wards until further notice. This includes GOSH and University College Hospital.

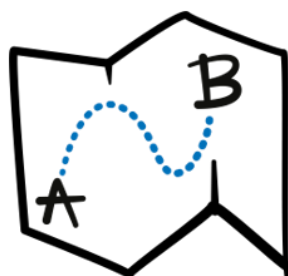
Our teaching teams thank you for your patience and understanding at this difficult time. They will remain in touch and continue to offer virtual support and educational advice wherever they can.

There are lots of ways for your child to continue with their learning. You can find guidance and recommendations on our website at gosh.nhs.uk/goshschool.

Q: What are you doing to protect GOSH staff?

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

Staff will continue to receive regular updates on PHE guidance, and staff who do not work directly with children, young people and families will 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, based on the latest NHS guidance.

Further information and support

Information from the NHS at [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Information for children is available on the BBC Newsround website at [bbc.co.uk/newsround](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround)

Information from our specialty departments

You can find [guidance for specific patient groups here](#). These were put together by our specialist clinical teams and are being reviewed and added to regularly.

