

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) – information for children, young people and families

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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.

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 [gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response) 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 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 you are concerned, please do not take your child to your doctor or pharmacist – stay at home and call NHS 111 for advice.

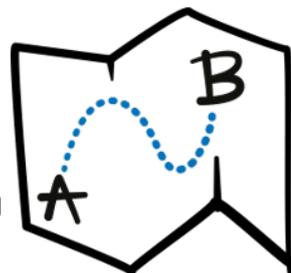
### Q: Does COVID-19 affect children?

A: The evidence to date (20 March 2020) shows that although children do develop COVID-19, very few children will develop a severe infection with COVID-19, whether they are immune-compromised or not.

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

A: We are working with our clinical teams to quickly develop more specific information for children and young people with underlying health problems, in line with advice from national bodies. 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.

We also advise that you consult the latest NHS guidance on [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or call NHS 111. Please contact us, as you usually would, if there are changes to your child's underlying condition. We will be doing our best to respond to your queries quickly, but this might take a little longer than usual in some cases.



**Q: What precautions should we take?**

A: You 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/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

As of 16 March 2020, everyone in the UK has been advised to limit contact with people if it isn't totally necessary. That means staying at home if possible and avoiding public spaces, such as playgrounds, theatres and cinemas. All unnecessary travel should be stopped too. 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 your child or a member of the family develops symptoms, visit the NHS 111 website, self-isolate everyone in the household for 14 days and let your clinical team know.

**Q: Should I stop taking my medication if I develop COVID19?**

No, taking your medication is very important and not taking it could make your condition worse. Please consult your specialty team before making any decisions regarding your 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 now 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're experiencing symptoms that concern you or think you may have come into close contact with someone affected by COVID-19, please don't go to your GP practice or come to hospital. Please stay indoors, avoid contact with others and go online to [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or, if you do not have internet access, ring NHS 111 for advice.

If you are coming to the hospital, 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.

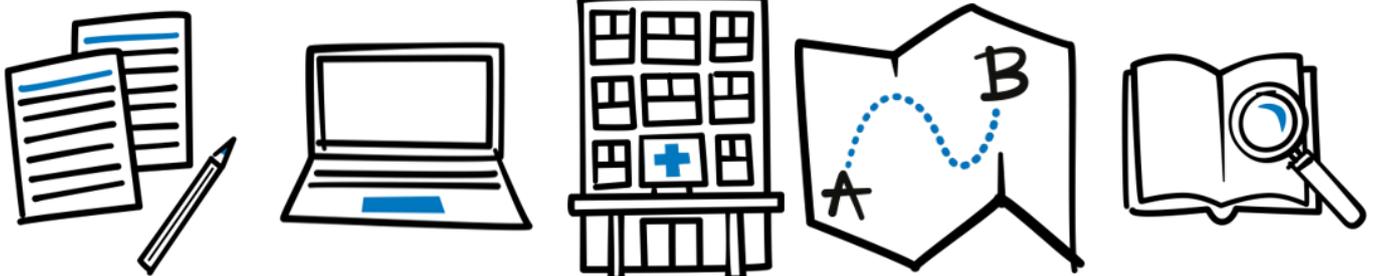
We know there will be some cases that require more than one carer. For these families, we are happy to discuss your child's needs directly. If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please contact [the PALS team](#).

**Q: What should I expect when I 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.

**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 guidelines wherever possible.

All clinical staff are receiving regular training on how to reduce the risk of passing on the virus within the hospital. This includes when masks 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.

Currently, we are not testing parents, but are routinely testing all children who are symptomatic. 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.

Staff who show symptoms when they are not at work will have rapid testing arranged 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](mailto:Medicine.Information@gosh.nhs.uk).

#### **Q: I've been to GOSH recently. Do I need to do anything, given there has been a confirmed case 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, contact NHS 111 for advice.

GOSH will contact anybody who came into close contact with any individuals affected by COVID-19 at GOSH to offer advice.

#### **Q: It's not coming to GOSH that worries me, it's travelling on public transport. Will you offer more parking permits if I want to drive?**

A: Unfortunately, the number of parking permits is limited by our local council so we cannot increase the number or make them last longer than currently.

We have arrangements with a local car park to offer parking at a reduced rate. Ask at GOSH main reception for details.

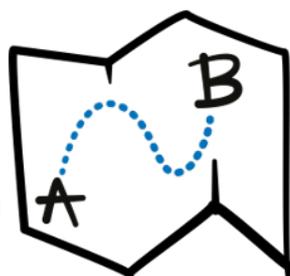
#### **Q: What are you doing to protect GOSH staff?**

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

Staff will continue to receive regular updates on PHE guidance, and we may ask staff who do not work directly with children, young people and families to work from home, if their job allows it.

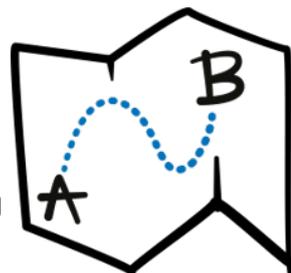
## **Further information and support**

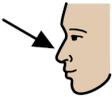
Information from the NHS at [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)



## About COVID-19 coronavirus

	At the moment, there is a bug affecting some people. The bug affects the lungs, making it harder to breathe.
	The number of people who have this bug is getting bigger. This means we have to look at how GOSH can help.
	We have decided to stop some check-ups, tests and operations at the moment. Your doctors and nurses will make sure that it is safe for you.
	Remember, when your doctor thinks you need the check-up, test or operation, we will re-book this for as soon as possible.
	If you get your medicines from GOSH, we will soon be using new ways to get these to you.



	If you get ill or your health gets worse, our doctors and nurses will always be here for you on the phone or computer.
	Remember, the NHS says we should all:
	Wash our hands with soap and water for 20 seconds lots of times during the day.
	Wash your hands when you get home and when you arrive at work or school.
	Use alcohol gel if you cannot use soap and water.
	If you need to cough or sneeze, always use a tissue to catch it rather than your hands. If you don't have any tissues, use your sleeve instead.
	Don't touch your face – eyes, nose and mouth – if you haven't washed your hands.
	Throw your used tissue in a rubbish bin. Do not carry it around with you or leave it on the side.
	If you have a cough or high temperature, stay indoors for 7 days. Do not go to your doctor or pharmacist. If you do not get better after 7 days or you get worse, call NHS 111 for advice.

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