

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – information for children, young people and families from the Non-Invasive or Tracheostomy Ventilation team

We understand that you might be worried about coronavirus – also known as COVID-19 – particularly if your child relies on ventilation breathing support through a mask or tracheostomy. This information sheet from the Non-Invasive or Tracheostomy Ventilation team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) sets out our advice for children, young people, parents and carers who use our services.

Please read this alongside our general FAQs for families at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-FAQ. You can also find the latest news, information and resources in our COVID-19 information hub at gosh.nhs.uk/coronavirus-hub.

Does COVID-19 affect children?

The evidence to date shows that although children do develop COVID-19 very few children will develop severe infection with COVID-19, even if they have an underlying health condition.

However, some people with certain conditions, are considered ‘extremely clinical vulnerable’ to COVID-19 and are more likely to develop serious symptoms. These patient groups are being advised to ‘shield’ until 31st July 2020 – stay at home as much as possible and keep visits outside to a minimum.

Following a review of new evidence and research findings, children and young people on long-term ventilator support, have been classified as ‘Group B’. They may need to continue to shield until 31st July 2020 however, the decision to not continue to shield requires a discussion between the clinician and the child and their family/carer. This includes the following children:

- Any child who is on long term ventilation via a tracheostomy
- Any child on non-invasive ventilation who is dependent on ventilation in everyday life or when unwell
- Any child who is on long term ventilation via mask or tracheostomy due to muscle weakness
- Any child on long term ventilation via mask or tracheostomy with severe neurodisability

If your child needs to shield, you will have received a communication from the NHS and/or your clinical team at GOSH. Please contact your child’s clinical team if you are unsure if your child should continue to shield.



Find more information about which children and young people require shielding on the RCPCH website at www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-shielding-guidance-children-young-people#children-who-should-be-advised-to-shield.

If your child is not included in these shielding lists, or you have discussed not shielding with your clinical team, they should now be able to leave the house with family, so long as they maintain strict social distancing.

If you're unsure whether your child should be shielding or have questions or concerns about staying shielded, please contact your clinical team.

We appreciate that being asked to shield your child might cause anxiety. You can find guidance from GOSH on what this means for your child and your family at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-and-vulnerable-children. You can find further guidance on shielding at nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus.

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19

- Please do not go to your GP or pharmacist – stay at home and use the NHS 111 online service at 111.nhs.uk or call NHS111 for urgent medical advice and inform your clinical team at GOSH.
- If your child has an escalation plan, please follow the plan as you would with any respiratory infection.
- If you need to escalate care, let the NIV/LTV CNS know as we may need to call ahead to your local A&E to help support remotely.
- If you have a care team, ensure you inform your care agency to make sure they have the correct personal protective equipment (PPE).
- If you are very worried about your child or feel their life is at risk, you should always call 999 or go to your local A&E or urgent care centre as you normally would.

If you have carer support at home

There is a possibility that carers may become unwell or need isolating, which could result in gaps in your child's care. Here are a few recommendations:

- Contact your care provider and discuss alternative levels of support. For instance, consider when your child's needs are greatest, perhaps daytime vs night time, so that the care provider can prioritise staff to the time that your child requires the most care support.
- If two parents/carers are at home, you may have to do shifts to take the place of a carer if your local provider reduces the amount of support they can provide.
- In an emergency, call your local healthcare providers or your clinical team at GOSH for advice. If you are very worried about your child or you feel their life is at risk, you should always call 999 or go to your local A&E or urgent care centre as you normally would.

If a parent/carer develops symptoms, they should self-isolate and hand over care to the other parent or another family member who is not counted as vulnerable.

Specific advice about equipment and supplies from the Non-Invasive or Tracheostomy Ventilation team



If the ventilator develops problems or breaks down, follow the same guidance as usual. If you have a service contract in place, then please call the maintenance company. We have not been informed of any changes to the service during this time. If you do not have a service contract, please contact your NIV team at GOSH.

As always, make sure you have enough equipment and try to order further supplies in good time.

Non-invasive ventilation

Check you have a spare mask, tubing, filters and oxygen port (if needed). Speak to your NIV team if you need anything else.

Tracheostomy ventilation

We recommend that any children being ventilated at home via a tracheostomy should have their ventilator circuits changed every two weeks, rather than every week.

This is to avoid issues with ventilator tubing supply during the COVID-19 pandemic and was agreed after consideration by the Paediatric Pan London LTV Group (PPLLTV) and GOSH Respiratory Consultants. We have carefully considered the potential impact of this change and feel it is the safest approach for patients who are being ventilated at home.

While we need to change ventilator circuits slightly less frequently, please be more vigilant for signs of infection and contact the GOSH LTV team if you have any questions or concerns.

As ever, if you are very worried about your child or feel their life is at risk, you should call 999 or go to your local A&E or urgent care centre as you normally would.

Oxygen

We are not anticipating a shortage in home oxygen supplies, so please do not attempt to stockpile oxygen. Suppliers will only replace empty cylinders with full ones.

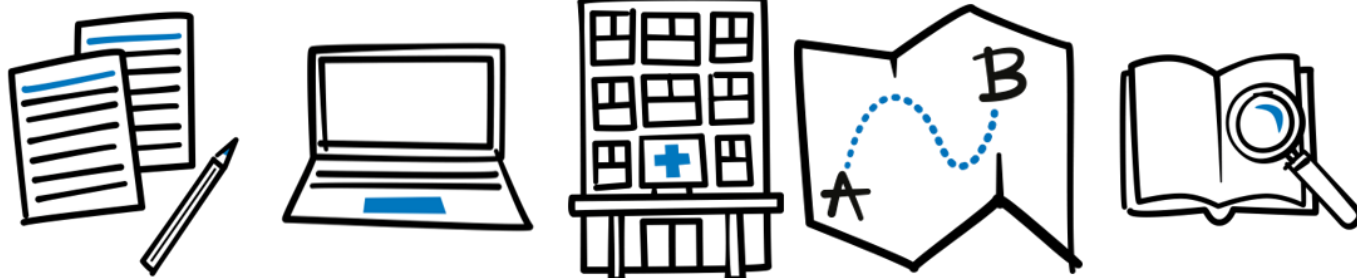
Specific advice about medicines from the Non-Invasive or Tracheostomy Ventilation team

Your child should continue to follow their care plan, including medication, physiotherapy and ventilation. Do not make any changes before discussing this with your specialty team.

Should we make alternative clinic appointments?

Our clinical teams are looking at each patient carefully to work out which clinics and consultations can be done another way such as through video or phone calls, which appointments, procedures and admissions can be rescheduled safely, and which patients absolutely need to come into hospital.

If your child has an upcoming clinic appointment, we will be in touch with you to discuss how we can best carry this out. This may mean your child is offered a telephone appointment or video consultation. If your child is unwell and needs to be seen face to face, we are here to support you and can arrange for the Non-Invasive or Tracheostomy Ventilation team to see them at GOSH.



As we start to re-open our services, we are prioritising children and young people who need our care most urgently. We understand that some families may be worried about visiting GOSH, but if we book a face to face appointment at the hospital, it's because we think it's important that your child is seen.

Further information and support

Information from the NHS at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Information for children is available on the BBC Newsround website at www.bbc.co.uk/newsround

Information from BPRS at <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/document-library/quality-improvement/covid-19/bprs-advice-on-easing-of-shielding/>

