

What will happen when I arrive at the hospital?

When you arrive at the hospital you should:

1. Wait for a member of staff who will give you instructions on how best to reduce your risk whilst visiting.
2. You must maintain social distancing (stay 2 metres apart from anyone else) during your visit to the hospital.

A member of staff will then:

1. Explain what PPE you will be required to wear.
2. Assist you with the correct wearing of the PPE.
3. Talk to you about what to expect when you go into see your loved one.
4. Inform you of the need to follow the local and national guidance on hand washing and the use of alcohol gel.
5. Assist you with the correct removal of PPE.
6. Escort you to and from the bed area.

What PPE will I have to wear?

You will have to wear:

- Disposable gloves
- Plastic apron
- Surgical mask
- You may have to wear a visor – the dedicated member of staff will advise you of this at the time of your visit.

Will I be able to touch my relative, partner or friend?

This is likely to be a very emotional time for everyone but especially for the person being allowed to visit.

You may be able to hold each others hand. We strongly advise against hugging and kissing patients at this time because of the risk of catching the virus.

What happens when I have finished the visit?

1. You will be helped away from the bedside and with the removal of your PPE in another area by the dedicated member of staff.
2. You will need to wash your hands and arm, right up to the elbow, once the PPE has been taken off. You will be helped with this by the dedicated member of staff.
3. You should then change into the clothes you have brought with you and place your visiting clothes into a pillowcase. This should be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for taking home.
5. You should then go straight home and not visit any other areas of the hospital.

What shall I do when I get home?

When you get home you should if possible:

1. Put the pillowcase, with your clothes from visiting inside, straight into the washing machine and wash at a minimum temperature of 60°C.
2. You are advised to take a shower.

What if I can't wash my clothes at home?

If you can't wash your clothes at home, you can leave the pillowcase sealed in the plastic bag for 7 days. Any virus that could have infected your clothes will no longer be alive after this length of time.



Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

A guide for visitors to patients with COVID-19



Due to COVID-19 we have had to temporarily stop visiting but we know that there are some exceptional circumstances where patients depend on their family, partner, carer(s) or friend(s) to provide them with essential care and support. This leaflet provides more information about these circumstances and what you can expect.

What are the exceptional circumstances that mean I can visit a patient during the COVID-19 pandemic?

These may include:

- The patient is receiving or starting end of life care.
- The visitor is the birthing partner of a woman in labour.
- The visitor is a carer who usually provides regular essential care or support to the patient who has a significant physical disability, mental ill health or learning disability or difficulty.
- The visitor is a parent(s) visiting the Neonatal unit, where there is guidance in line with national recommendations.

How many visitors are allowed?

Only one nominated visitor will be allowed to visit. This is because you will have to be supported to wear Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE), such as masks, goggles, gowns and gloves to avoid you catching COVID-19.

How do we decide who should visit?

The patient's wishes are what is most important and they will be able to choose who their visitor should be. Where the patient is not able to decide, you as their main carer, partner, friend or as a family must decide who is best placed to visit. This is usually the next of kin but can be someone else if that is the patient's or your choice.

In choosing who should visit, please remember that it is likely to be an emotional and stressful time for both the patient and the visitor. It will be a very different experience to what anyone has been used to before. Stress can increase the risk of experiencing issues with other medical conditions, such as cardiac (heart) problems and also increases the risk of stroke. If you are unsure who would be best to visit, please talk to the staff on the ward before you finally decide who your chosen visitor should be.

What things should I consider when deciding the nominated visitor?

It is important to understand the risks to visiting patients at this time.

- If you are one of the high risk people identified as susceptible to COVID-19, (for example you have a chronic illness such as COPD, poorly controlled diabetes, or are pregnant) you have an increased risk of contracting the virus and becoming seriously unwell, or even dying. The hospital has a significant number of patients with the virus and the risk of you coming into contact with the virus is therefore higher.
- These visits are often traumatic and, because of the equipment and clothing staff and patients and visitors are having to wear to protect themselves and each other, this is likely to feel much worse. People under the age of 16 may be affected by this experience.

Who will decide if I can visit and when?

- The visit by the person identified as the one nominated visitor will be considered by the nurse and consultant in charge.
- The Nurse and Consultant in charge will carry out a verbal risk assessment with the nominated visitor. Visiting will only be permitted after this verbal risk assessment has been completed.

What is a 'risk assessment'?

The risk assessment for visiting in exceptional circumstances is a way for STH to make sure that your visit to the hospital to see your loved one is well managed and does not put yourself or anyone else in harms way. By doing this risk assessment, we can plan to put in place ways to reduce the risk, such as wearing PPE.

What are the kinds of things that you will consider in the risk assessment?

We will look at:

- the area you are going to be visiting and whether this is a high risk area, such as Critical Care, or a lower risk area that has few or no patients with the virus.
- Whether the visitor can understand instructions and follow all the advice given.
- Whether the visitor is able to wear the PPE needed.
- Whether the visitor fully understands and accepts the risks that they may be exposed to.
- Whether the visitor may be a potential infectious risk themselves, when entering or exiting the building.

What will I need to do before visiting?

Before visiting you will need to:

1. Dress in clothes that leave your arm (from your elbow to your fingertips) free from clothes and any items such as jewelry or watches.
2. Bring a spare set of clothes to change into after you have visited and before you leave the hospital.
3. Bring a pillowcase to place your clothes in as this will allow you to put the pillowcase directly into the washing machine without handling its contents when you arrive home.
4. Come directly to the hospital from home and do not visit any other areas of the hospital.