

# Giving consent for your procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic

You and your consultant have agreed that you need to have a procedure as part of your care. This leaflet should give you the information you need to know about having a procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called coronavirus.

Typical symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Most people will have mild symptoms and experience has shown that some people do not even know that they have COVID-19.

Some people who have COVID-19 can become very ill and may develop severe pneumonia, which causes shortness of breath and breathing difficulties, kidney failure and even death. People with a weakened immune system, older people and those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer or chronic lung disease are more at risk of having severe symptoms than younger, healthy people.

## Risks

Your consultant will have explained the risks and benefits of the procedure with you already, but it is important to understand that there are risks linked to COVID-19 that you must also think about.

Coming into hospital will mean that you may come into contact with members of staff who carry the coronavirus without knowing it. Also, you could be infected, but not be showing symptoms and may pass the virus onto others.

There is evidence that also suggests that if you have coronavirus in your system and have a procedure involving a general anaesthetic, even if you are not showing symptoms, you could end up being very ill.

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Department

Surgery

Review due

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**Patient  
Information**

Given the nature of the virus, there is a risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 by going ahead with your procedure. It is important to say that we are learning about COVID-19 all the time, so there may be some risks which we are not yet aware of that may also affect your outcome from the procedure.

**What are we doing to reduce the risks (preventative measures)?**

Here in the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, we have worked hard to make sure that our hospitals have reduced the risk of COVID-19 spreading among staff and patients. Below are some of the actions we are taking:

- There are fewer people in our hospital - our wards have restricted visiting times and we also limit the number of visitors to help stop the spread of infection to vulnerable patients.
- Our staff are given PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) which helps stop the infection moving from person to person.
- Our staff have quick access to COVID-19 swab-testing if they have symptoms themselves.
- All of our patients admitted as emergencies are given swab-tests and we have created safe areas for patients admitted with COVID-19.
- We also swab-test patients who we plan to bring into hospital before they are admitted, even if they have no symptoms.
- We practice social distancing and expect everyone to wear face coverings or PPE as required.
- All our practice follows the current national guidance for healthcare organisations.

**Deciding not to go ahead with your procedure**

We understand that, knowing that there are more risks during the pandemic, you may not want to go ahead with your procedure at this time.

If you decide to delay your treatment, your consultant will tell you about the risks to your health of not proceeding and explain any alternative treatments that they may be able to offer you.

**Patient  
Information**

If you decide not to go ahead at this time, but still want your procedure at a later date, we will note this in our records. Unfortunately, we will not be able to agree with you in advance when we will be able to rebook your procedure. This is important to note in case your condition changes, as you will need to contact your consultant's secretary.

**Deciding to go ahead with your procedure**

If you do decide to have your procedure, we would like you to take additional precautions. We will ask you to have a swab-test done, to see if you have COVID-19 and also ask if you have any symptoms or have been in contact with anyone else who has them. We will ask you and your household to isolate for a period of time in order to reduce your risk of catching COVID-19 before your procedure. We will discuss this with you in more detail when we contact you to arrange your procedure date.

If you do have symptoms, have been in contact with someone else that does, or your test comes back positive, we will delay your treatment if the risks of going ahead outweigh the benefit of having your procedure; your consultant will contact you to explain the options.

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