

Important information for patients of The Staight Practice

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

There is a great deal of information out there about Coronavirus and some of the advice to patients can be confusing. The NHS have an excellent website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> which makes it clear which patients are at increased risk and at the highest risk.

Those at the highest risk (extremely vulnerable or 'shielded' people) are advised to take extra steps to avoid contracting Coronavirus and they must follow this advice as per the Government guidance.

If you are unsure about which category you fall into, please telephone the practice and talk to one of the doctors who will be very happy to advise.

Appointments

The Practice is working and seeing patients as usual and should be contacted by telephone on the usual number – 020-7581-4222.

Telephone consultations will be charged according to time and any action required (£50-£150).

Practice staff will routinely ask whether you have any symptoms of Coronavirus before making an appointment for you to see the doctor.

If there is any doubt, a discussion with Dr Staight or Dr Bealing will establish whether the matter can be dealt with entirely over the telephone or video consultation, or if a physical examination is appropriate.

Face-to-face examination may be performed by your doctor wearing a mask, gloves and other items of PPE (Personal Protection Equipment). You may also be asked to wear a mask. Do not bring anyone with you to the appointment if at all possible.

If you think you may have any symptoms of Coronavirus, please **DO NOT** come into the Practice, but self-isolate and contact us by telephone. We are able to give advice on diagnosis, symptom management and medication and when it is appropriate to seek further help.

Any emergencies will be dealt with by either contacting 111 or calling an ambulance. Hospital admissions for Coronavirus are only dealt with through the NHS system.

Prescriptions

If you are well, routine prescriptions can be collected from the Practice or faxed through to your local pharmacy (there is a small charge for this). The post is still functioning and so they can also be posted. Prescriptions for controlled drugs, as usual, have to be collected by the person for whom they are prescribed.

Routine checks

Vaccinations for children will continue. Routine medicals or check-ups have now restarted.

If your child is having vaccinations through the NHS, they will be arranged to protect the children from being exposed to Coronavirus and it is important that these vaccinations continue.

Specialist referrals

You can still be referred to a specialist privately, although many are consulting via telephone, email or video-link, face-to-face consultations are now being re-established.

Blood tests can still be arranged, either through the Practice during a face-to-face consultation or The Doctors Laboratory.

If you need to be admitted to hospital with Coronavirus, there are currently no private facilities and admission is solely through the NHS. It is possible you may not be directed to a local hospital because it depends on where facilities are available. If this happens, please ask your family to keep the Practice updated.

Testing for Coronavirus

There are currently two types of test for Coronavirus:

1. Testing in the acute stage of the infection, known as the PCR swab, taken from the nose and throat: a testing kit can be collected from the surgery (by a non-symptomatic person, e.g. a friend) or sent to a patient by post. The patient will then send the swab back to the lab by post.

Results are available 2-4 days from receipt of the swab by the lab. This costs £80

The government is now also offering this test – see the link below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

2. Testing after the infection has passed the acute phase, known as the antibody test, via a blood sample: the Abbott antibody test should be carried out at least 14 days from the first day of your infection. This is because it takes time for the antibodies to develop in response to the infection. The doctor will take blood to be sent to the lab.

Results are normally available within 24/48 hours. This costs £30, plus the cost of the consultation as the doctor needs to take a blood sample.

This test has 100% specificity, which means a positive test indicates definite exposure and the presence of antibodies to Covid-19.

It appears that some patients who have had Covid-19 do not develop antibodies but fight the infection without them by using our bodies first line of defence, T-cells.

Immunity

It is not currently known how long assumed immunity from a positive swab or antibody test lasts, but much research is being done on this subject.

Social distancing rules and hygiene measures, as well as following official Government guidelines should continue whatever your test result.

Out of hours arrangements

If you have significant worsening of your Coronavirus symptoms, please contact 111, or in a serious emergency 999.

The out of hours service comprising GPs that we regularly use is still available for advice.

Please be reassured that we are open and available as normal, and we are very aware that other healthcare issues will still need to be addressed. We are doing everything we can to support you, so please do not hesitate to call if you need us.

Guy Staight

Caroline Bealing

DR. GUY STAIGHT

DR CAROLINE BEALING

25/6/2020