

## Your planned procedure at NDDH Endoscopy Unit: Coronavirus precautions

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net).

At the moment, many people are understandably anxious about coming to hospital for treatment because they are concerned about the COVID-19 (coronavirus). We have put a number of processes in place so that you can be confident that coming to hospital is safe and that there are no extra risks from having your procedure at this time.

### Do you really need the procedure?

We appreciate that people are concerned about coming to hospital, but your GP or a hospital consultant has reviewed your case and it is really important that you attend for this investigation. Delaying your test could result in harm due to a delay in diagnosis.

### Coronavirus in North Devon

The spread of coronavirus has been different across the country and the South West has had some of the lowest numbers of cases and deaths. In turn, North Devon and Torridge have had some of the lowest numbers in the South West.

We now have in place a new 'green (non-COVID) pathway' for patients attending the hospital for their procedures. This pathway involves taking extra precautions before your procedure, when you arrive on the day and during/after your procedure.

The safety of patients and staff is our top priority, so despite these low numbers, we want to reassure you that we have put in place a range of measures at North Devon District Hospital to keep everyone safe from coronavirus.

- Our clinical spaces and waiting areas are less crowded because we are doing more telephone and video appointments, and have limited visitor numbers
- We have separate areas to keep patients who might or do have coronavirus apart from others
- We are carrying out lots of testing and symptom checking for both staff and patients
- We are practising good hand hygiene and are cleaning all areas frequently

- We are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect staff and patients
- We are supporting staff and patients to be socially distant in communal spaces like waiting rooms and corridors
- We are asking people to follow the guidance in this leaflet

## Before your procedure

If you are having a colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy, you will require:

1. A pre-assessment
2. Self-isolation
3. Swab testing

### 1. Pre-assessment

To reduce the number of people who have to come to hospital, you will have a telephone assessment instead of a face to face appointment.

### 2. Self-isolation

It is really important that you reduce the likelihood of catching coronavirus before your procedure because the risk of complications during your procedure is higher if you have coronavirus.

NHS England recommends that you and your household should self-isolate for 14 days before your procedure.

Self-isolating is similar to the government guidance for people who have or live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus and means that you:

- Stay at home for the whole 14 days
- Do not go shopping or to work or attend any gatherings, including outdoor gatherings or those in private spaces
- Do not use public transport
- Strictly avoid contact with anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus

You may attend other necessary medical appointments during this period, such as pre-procedure blood tests. Ideally, the whole family should self-isolate to reduce the risk any further.

We do understand that self-isolating can be very difficult, but it is really important that every precaution is taken to protect yourself, other patients and the staff looking after you.

### 3. Swab testing

We will arrange for you to have a swab test two to three days before your procedure. This is because some people do not show any signs or symptoms of the coronavirus.

Swab samples are taken from your throat and from your nose and sent to the laboratory for testing. The test may cause discomfort because the samples need to be taken from the back of the throat and nose. The throat swab may make you cough or gag and the nose swab may make you want to sneeze. The discomfort only lasts for a few seconds. The result is usually available within 24-48 hours.

If your test confirms you don't have coronavirus, we can all be confident that you do not have the virus when it's time for you to come into hospital. It is really important that you continue to self-isolate in the time between your test result and coming into hospital for your procedure.

If the test result confirms you have coronavirus, we will let you know and may postpone your procedure until you are well. If we postpone your procedure, we will be in touch to discuss re-booking your procedure as soon as possible.

## **When you arrive**

On the day of the procedure, you will be asked to arrive at the time stated on your letter. Please wait outside of the endoscopy reception and a nurse will come out to greet you. You will be offered a face mask to wear and notice that all staff in clinical areas will be wearing them also.

The nurse will record your temperature and you will be asked if you have had any of the following symptoms over the past four weeks.

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature
- Altered or loss of sense of taste or smell

It is really important that you tell us if you have had any of the symptoms, as the risk of complications may be higher if you have coronavirus.

We have arranged the seating and trolley space within our unit to ensure social distancing from other patients.

## **During and after your procedure**

The staff looking after you during and after your procedure will be wearing PPE. This may be a surgical mask, apron and gloves, or it may be a FFP3 mask, a long-sleeved gown, gloves and a visor. This will very much depend on the type of procedure you are having.

If for any reason, an overnight hospital stay is required, you will be transferred to a 'green' ward, where all the patients have been screened, and we will help you to go home as soon as possible.

## **More information**

We understand that you may still have questions about these processes. If you wish to speak to someone, please call the endoscopy unit on 01271 349180.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust  
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple  
Devon EX31 4JB  
Tel. 01271 322577  
[www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk)

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Tel: 01271 313970 / email: [ndht.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.contactus@nhs.net)