



COVID-19 Advice for Pharmacies

Version 3.3



**Publication date
24 March 2020**

Version History

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V1.0	14/02/20	Creation of document
V2.0	03/03/20	<p>Link added to guidance for patient's presenting in the primary care setting.</p> <p>Text updated to include: 'The pharmacy should remain open unless advised otherwise by the Health Protection Team.'</p> <p>'Pharmacy Staff in contact with a suspected case are not required to self-isolate unless directed by the Health Protection Team.'</p>
V3.2	18/03/2020	<p>Text amended to remove references to patients' travel history to risk areas and patients awaiting test results</p> <p>Text amended to recommend individuals to follow the "stay at home" advice and social distancing.</p> <p>Text amended to remove duplicate text.</p> <p>Text updated to include clarification on the management of pharmacy staff who develop respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19.</p>
V3.3	24/03/2020	<p>The recommendation on "shielding" (to protect people, including children, who are extremely vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19) has been introduced.</p> <p>Updated recommendations for staff.</p>

Introduction

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China. Clinical presentation may range from mild-to-moderate illness to pneumonia or severe acute respiratory infection. Further information on COVID-19 can be found on [NHS Inform](#).

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The following measures are recommended to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect people at increased risk of severe illness:

Household isolation (Stay at home) measures will reduce the community spread of COVID-19. This means that anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 and anyone else living in the same household should follow “stay at home” advice on [NHS Inform](#).

Social distancing measures should be used by everyone, including children. The aim of social distancing measures is to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Strict social distancing is strongly advised for people who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Up to date information on at risk groups can be found on the [NHS Inform](#) website. Note that these groups are broader than those for whom shielding advice (below) is recommended.

Shielding is a measure to protect people, including children, who are extremely vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19 because of certain underlying health conditions. The aim of shielding is to minimise interaction between these individuals and others to protect them from coming into contact with COVID-19. People with these serious underlying health conditions are strongly advised to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Further information, including the list of underlying health conditions that make people extremely vulnerable, is available on the [NHS Inform](#) website.

You should consider how best to deliver your service in light of these recommendations, including considering the needs of vulnerable patients who may not be able to access the pharmacy.

Please note that this is an evolving situation and the most up to date guidance should always be checked online at [HPS COVID-19 page](#).

Advice for Pharmacies

Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 could present to their local pharmacy for advice. Patient information posters for NHS settings should be displayed so they can be seen before patients enter the premises. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough

and/or

- high temperature.

If a patient who is self-isolating because of presumed COVID-19 makes contact seeking pharmacy advice and the guidance cannot be provided over the telephone, ask the patient to contact [NHS 24](#) (phone 111).

If an individual telephones or attends the pharmacy suffering from respiratory symptoms or a new continuous cough and/or high temperature, they should be advised to return home and consult the [NHS Inform](#) website for further advice. The website includes 'stay at home advice' individuals with these symptoms, plus any members of their household, must follow.

On leaving the pharmacy, if the individual has had contact with the counter top, it should be cleaned with disinfectant wipes.

If it is an emergency and you need to call an ambulance for the individual, dial 999 and inform the ambulance call handler of the concerns about COVID-19 infection. While awaiting ambulance transfer, show the individual into a room. Seat them at the rear of the room and make sure that no other customers/individuals enter. Leave the room if safe to do so. If you have to enter the room, stay at least 2 metres away from the individual if possible.

Once the individual has left the room in which they have been isolated the room should not be used. The room door should remain shut until it has been cleaned with detergent and disinfectant. Once this process has been completed, the room can be put back into use immediately. Follow the [guidance for environmental cleaning following a suspected case \(in section 6 of the Guidance for primary care\)](#).

The pharmacy should remain open unless advised otherwise.

Pharmacy Staff in contact with a suspected case in the pharmacy are not required to self-isolate. Pharmacy staff should follow national advice on “staying at home” if they or a member of their household develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19. All pharmacy staff should also follow national guidance on social distancing and shielding, as appropriate. Further details can be found on [NHS Inform](#).

Staff with underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including those who are immunosuppressed, should not provide direct care to patients with possible or confirmed COVID-19. Staff who think they may be at increased risk should seek advice from their line manager or local Occupational Health service. Pregnant staff should also seek advice from their line manager or local Occupational Health service. Guidance on COVID-19 and pregnancy is available on the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#) website.

As part of this risk assessment, you should consider that persons with symptoms of COVID-19 should practice household isolation and defer any non-urgent appointments and therefore you should not be providing care/have contact to patients with COVID-19. Staff with conditions that increase their vulnerability to COVID-19 should be taking shielding or stringent social distancing measures and should therefore not be on the premises.

All guidance specific to COVID-19 is available on the [HPS website](#).

Appendix 1: Contact Details

Local Health Protection teams in the Health Boards

Organisation	Office Hours Telephone Number	Out of Hours Telephone Number Ask for Public Health On Call
Ayrshire and Arran	01292 885858	01563 521 133 Crosshouse Hospital switchboard
Borders	01896 825560	01896 826 000 Borders General switchboard
Dumfries and Galloway	01387 272 724	01387 246 246
Fife	01592 226435	01592 643355 Victoria Hospital switchboard
Forth Valley	01786 457 283 Ask for CPHM on call	01324 566000 Ask for CPHM on call
Grampian	01224 558520	0845 456 6000
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	0141 201 4917	0141 211 3600 Gartnavel switchboard
Highland	01463 704886	01463 704000 Raigmore switchboard
Lanarkshire	01698 858232	01236 748 748 Monklands switchboard
Lothian	0131 465 5429/5422	0131 536 1000 Edinburgh Royal switchboard
Orkney	01856 888034	01856 888 000 Balfour Hospital switchboard
Shetland	01595 743340	01595 743000 Gilbert Bain switchboard
Tayside	01382 596 976/987	01382 660111 Ninewells switchboard
Western Isles	01851 704704	01851 708033