



Aspen Medical Practice

Covid-19 Newsletter to patients

We would like to thank you for your support during this difficult time. We are working hard to ensure we keep you updated on developments nationally and locally around Covid-19.

New ways to access healthcare

We are adapting to a new way of working, utilising telephone consultations and introducing video consultations. Our GPs and Advanced Nurse Practitioners are working both at the surgery and remotely if they are self isolating.

Last month we took the difficult decision to temporarily close the Tuffley Branch as we could no longer staff this due to unpredictable staffing and supervision levels.

Please only attend the surgery if you have been given an appointment. Patients will no longer be able to drop in.

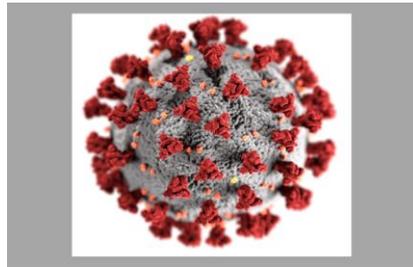
If you become unwell with a cough or fever you should self-isolate at home for a minimum of 7 days or until you are fever free. Household members must self-isolate for 14 days even if they remain well. An isolation note can be obtained from

<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>

Covid-19 Hub

Saintbridge Surgery has become our 'Hot Covid-19 Hub'. Where possible patients will be seen in their car or inside our temporary shelter to reduce the risk of environmental contamination and

risk of spread to our medical staff. Unlike a normal consultation, the history and subsequent plan will be communicated via mobile phone call, with face to face contact, limited to brief examination only.



Focus on urgent care

Following government advice, the Surgery and Hospitals are having to focus on urgent care only. Resources in the community are being diverted away from services such as podiatry and physiotherapy. These clinicians have now been deployed to help patients within the hospital or community who are suffering from Covid-19 and other serious illness.

We are no longer able to refer non urgent conditions to the hospital. If your GP has requested an X-ray/scan or bloods, this is likely to be urgent so please attend these appointments,

Contacting the surgery

However, it is important that we do see those patients who do need to be seen. If you think you have a problem that you cannot manage at home by looking at our website or NHS website, please

call or send an online message via the website to our surgery.

Please follow normal procedure of calling 999 if you have symptoms suggestive of a heart attack, stroke, heavy bleeding, broken limb or meningitis please call 999

Our care navigators will try and help you and if needed put you down for a telephone consultation with one of our GP's. Often problems can be resolved over the phone or via video consultation. However, you may need to be seen and we continue to have face to face appointments for those patients who need it.

Children, especially may need to be seen face to face and if you have concerns please do contact NHS111 or the surgery. Aspen Centre is being kept as a 'clean' site with appointments only for patients with no covid-19 symptoms.

We are trying to protect our staff and patients by wearing personal protective equipment and ensuring that only patients who do not have symptoms are seen in our normal clinics.

You will be screened before entering the building and before booking your appointment. Please be honest with our staff as we have had cases of patients lying about their symptoms and exposing staff and other patients unfairly.

Mental Health During this time

It is understandable that the current situation can make people feel anxious, sad or upset. This is completely normal. Please check out this website for more advice <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/ever-y-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

Website updates in practice news

Please keep up to date with our websites where we post daily updates on what the latest guidance is and what resources are available locally to support vulnerable patients especially those who are being shielded or stringent social distancing.

Support is available for those shielding or socially isolating who need help with prescriptions and shopping etc:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub/>

Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services. If this is not possible, then the public sector, business, charities and the general public are gearing up to help those advised to stay at home. Please discuss your daily needs during this period of staying at home with carers, family, friends, neighbours or local community groups to see how they can support you.



Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus->

[extremely-vulnerable](#) to register for the support that you need. This includes help with food, shopping deliveries and additional care you might need.

The government is helping pharmacies to deliver prescriptions. Prescriptions will continue to cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not currently have your prescriptions collected or delivered, you can arrange this by:

1. Asking someone who can pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy (this is the best option, if possible).
2. Contacting your pharmacy to ask them to help you find a volunteer (who will have been ID checked) or deliver it to you.

You may also need to arrange for collection or delivery of hospital specialist medication that is prescribed to you by your hospital care team.

If you receive support from health and social care organisations, for example, if you have care provided for you through the local authority or health care system, this will continue as normal. Your health or social care provider will be asked to take additional precautions to make sure that you are protected. The advice for formal carers is included in the [home care provision](#).

Age UK

Age UK Gloucestershire has had to reconfigure the way it delivers support to Gloucestershire's older people. It is currently providing support in three ways (further information

at: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire/>

Telephone: [01452 422 660](tel:01452422660)

Facebook: [@Age-UK-Gloucestershire](#)



Supporting Older People to resolve specific issues: The Help Team is available Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 16:00 to help older people resolve specific problems. The team has up to date information about local resources and support. The Out of Hospital Team continues to support older people recently discharged from hospital who need guidance to stay well at home through in depth welfare calls.

Supporting Older People to stay connected:

Recognising that social isolation and the associated wellbeing issues are a real and serious issue for older people, new Freephone telephone number for people who are alone and who want to have a friendly conversation with a staff member or volunteer has been set up. Call 0800 2980579, Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 16:00.

- Support for Communities who want to help:
 - Signposting individuals to existing local groups, and central hub resources
 - Support and advice for local community groups to support older people safely and effective.