

COVID-19 – Important information for all patients

Testing for COVID-19

We encourage all patients with outpatient or hospital appointments to take part in the free twice weekly lateral flow test (LFT) scheme.

Details of this scheme, including collection arrangements for the LFT kits and how to perform the test, are available at <https://covid19.gov.gg/guidance/lateralflow>. If you do not have internet access, please ask your consultant's PA for further details.

If any test is positive, you must stay at home and contact the COVID-19 Clinical Helpline on 01481 220001 or 01481 220002 or complete the online form <https://www.gov.gg/covidnotification>.

Outpatients

In addition to the regular twice weekly LFTs, all outpatients (and visitors) should do a test on the morning of your appointment.

Elective surgery or endoscopy

If you are having surgery under general or regional anaesthesia or undergoing bronchoscopy or upper GI endoscopy, regardless of your vaccination status, you must have five daily LFTs before surgery. The first four are done at home (see table below) and the final test is done on arrival at the hospital.

You will need to collect the lateral flow test kit at least five days before the date of admission. Details of the current collection point and times of opening are on the link above. Please bring your own LFT to the hospital on the day of admission to ensure you have a familiar kit for the final test.

Days to undertake the mandatory pre-operation tests

Operation day	1 st LFT	2 nd LFT	3 rd LFT	4 th LFT	5 th LFT
Monday	Thursday morning	Friday morning	Saturday morning	Sunday morning	On admission (Monday)
Tuesday	Friday morning	Saturday morning	Sunday morning	Monday morning	On admission (Tuesday)
Wednesday	Saturday morning	Sunday morning	Monday morning	Tuesday morning	On admission (Wednesday)
Thursday	Sunday morning	Monday morning	Tuesday morning	Wednesday morning	On admission (Thursday)
Friday	Monday morning	Tuesday morning	Wednesday morning	Thursday morning	On admission (Friday)

For children under primary school age, or in other circumstances where home testing is not practical, we will arrange a single laboratory PCR test which will be done by the nurses at MSG or the hospital. It is vital that you contact your consultant's PA as soon as possible (minimum four days) if the tests cannot be done at home so the PCR test can be booked, and your treatment is not postponed.

Please keep a record of the daily LFTs during the four days before surgery (eg with a mobile phone photo or a diary entry) so you can confirm the tests when checked in at the hospital.

Ensuring your safety

The main purpose of this testing programme is to minimise the risk of you having COVID-19 at the time you have your operation. COVID-19 infection at the time of an operation has been shown to result in much higher risks of complications or death.

The testing also helps protect you from inadvertently exposing other patients (many of whom may be in a vulnerable group) or staff to risk of infection.

Masks

Following current guidelines, you must wear a face covering or mask while at the MSG and at the Hospital.

Contact with a COVID-19 positive case

If you are due to have a general anaesthetic or an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) such as endoscopy and you have been in close contact (close and family contacts) with a COVID-19 positive case, your surgery or procedure will be postponed for 10 days following the date of contact.

Please let your consultant's PA know if you have been identified as a close contact in the 10 days before a scheduled appointment:

If you are due to have an outpatient appointment or hospital admission for a procedure under local anaesthetic and you have been in close contact (close and family contacts) with a COVID-19 positive case, you may be seen provided that:

- You have a negative LFT on the day
- You are at the end of an operating list or clinic
- You spend as little time as possible in waiting rooms etc
- You wear a mask and practice good hand hygiene

Arrangements for emergency care can be made with advanced notification.

Protecting yourself before surgery

To protect yourself and help us protect other patients you are encouraged to follow the below guidance before undergoing elective surgery.

All patients undergoing non-emergency surgical procedures involving general or regional anaesthetic should take measures to protect themselves from COVID-19 before their operations.

It is important to avoid the risk of developing COVID-19 at the time of surgery as it is known this increases your risk of a poor outcome or death.

What measures should I take in the two-week period before surgery?

There are a range of measures you can take to reduce risks prior to surgery. These range from the simple measures below to a period of up to two weeks of isolation from other people.

Simple measures could include:

- Asking friends and family to take lateral flow tests before visiting
- You and the people you meet wearing face masks
- Improved ventilation
- Avoiding crowds especially in enclosed spaces
- Hand hygiene and social distancing

The exact measures you choose to adopt will depend on your own risk profile and the type of surgery you are having. The following factors increase your risk:

- Age over 65
- Major surgery
- 'Extremely clinically vulnerable' groups
- Underlying health conditions such as diabetes, respiratory and heart conditions
- Ethnic origin
- Male

Having two doses of COVID-19 vaccine (and a booster / third dose if offered) will further reduce your risk.

Review of this advice

We will review this advice regularly and update it if the situation changes.

Dr Graham Beck
MSG COVID Lead

Updated 16 March 2022