

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – information for children, young people and families under the care of the Gastroenterology team

We know that you will be worried about coronavirus (COVID-19), particularly if your child has digestive condition. This information sheet from the Gastroenterology team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) provides the latest guidance about protecting your child from the virus and any specific measures you need to take during the latest lockdown period.

Please read this information alongside our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document – available online at <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information-children-young-people-and-families> alongside other helpful information and resources to support you during this pandemic.

The guidance in this information sheet has been reviewed and agreed by the clinical team at GOSH alongside guidance from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and the Government.

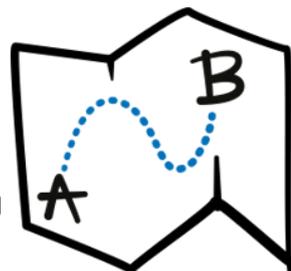
Does COVID-19 affect children and young people with digestive conditions more than others?

The evidence to date suggests that although children do develop COVID-19, very few children develop severe symptoms, even if they have an underlying health condition. This includes children with gastroenterology conditions, whether they are immune-compromised or not.

What specific precautions do we need to take?

Everyone should take the widely published precautions to avoid infection, including good handwashing, and not touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Please keep all of your child's medications with them at all times and familiarise yourself with how and when to use their emergency medications if required. For more information please click on this link: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-resources-parents-carers>



Does my child need to ‘shield’ during this current lockdown?

The government has issued new advice in November 2020 around shielding and the requirements during the second national ‘lockdown’. These changes may have caused both confusion and anxiety.

The majority of children with gastroenterology conditions irrespective of treatment, are at low risk of complications related to coronavirus. For the majority of our patients and who are on immunosuppressant medications, the current recommendation is that they can continue to go to school and do not need to ‘shield’. Furthermore they are still able to attend school even if a family member is shielding.

However there is a group of both adults and children who have been classed as ‘extremely clinically vulnerable,’ where the government has advised they should shield during this period of national ‘lockdown.’

The government has contacted all patients who may have met shielding criteria previously, and has advised them to contact their clinical teams, as to whether they are viewed as ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’.

It is important to note, as we have learnt more about COVID-19 that for many children who were shielding previously, this is no longer required.

What should I do if my child (or someone they are in contact with) shows symptoms of COVID-19?

If you, your child or anyone else in your household has symptoms of COVID-19, please do not visit your doctor or pharmacist – stay at home and use the NHS 111 online service at 111.nhs.uk for urgent medical advice.

However, if you are worried about your child or feel their life is at risk, you should call 999 or go to your local A&E or urgent care centre as you normally would.

If you are due to attend GOSH and you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19, please call their specialty team for advice and support before visiting the hospital.

Should my child continue to take their medication and/or treatment?

Yes, taking medication as prescribed is very important and not taking it could make your child’s condition worse. Please consult your specialty team before making any decisions regarding your child’s medication.

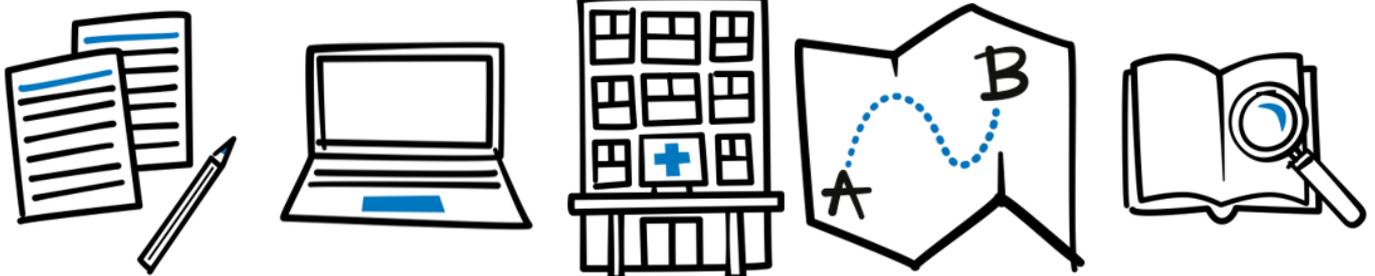
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How do we get hold of the equipment and/or supplies my child needs?

If you have registered with MyGOSH, you can contact our dietitians or specialist nurse via the app. If you are not registered, we can help you do so as this is our preferred method of communication. Information about MyGOSH can be found at: www.gosh.nhs.uk/your-hospital-visit/mygosh

What happens if I have planned admission?

Every patient will have COVID swabs prior to a procedure and admission. Patients who we are unsure of their COVID status, or have COVID positive are isolated to reduce inpatient transmission.



What's happening with routine clinic appointments at GOSH?

Our clinical teams are looking at each patient carefully to work out which patients absolutely need to come into hospital, which clinics and consultations can be done another way such as video or phone calls, and which appointments, procedures and admissions can be rescheduled safely.

If your child has an upcoming clinic appointment, we will be in touch with you to discuss how we can best carry this out. This may mean that your child is offered a telephone appointment or video consultation. If necessary, your child will also be given a face-to-face appointment in the future.

We are prioritising children and young people who need our care most urgently. We understand that

some families may be worried about visiting GOSH, but if we invite you to visit the hospital, it's because we think it's important that your child is seen.

How do I contact my specialty team?

You can also contact your specialty team via MyGOSH once you have registered – more information is available at <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/your-hospital-visit/mygosh>

Can my child have the vaccine?

Unfortunately neither vaccine has been licensed for children and young people under 16 years old, so there are no plans to vaccinate our patients currently. If this situation changes, we will of course let you know.

Further information and support

Coronavirus (COVID-19) hub from GOSH – <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information-hub>

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) – <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-resources-parents-carers>

