

# Pre-operative information for children and families

## Planned surgery for children at the RUH during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Children and their households must be free of symptoms and must not have been in close contact with anyone with suspected COVID-19 for 14 days before admission**

**We will perform a COVID-19 swab test on children about 3 days before the day of their surgery**

**The result must be negative before going ahead with surgery**

***All children and families must comply with these rules, or risk cancellation.***

Your child's safety is our first priority. We want to make sure we perform the operation at the best time and it is very important your child **does not have coronavirus** at that point. Equally importantly, we need to ensure that you do not bring coronavirus into the hospital.

Current evidence shows that some people with the coronavirus have minimal or no signs of illness; therefore, even if your child feels completely well, they could be infected with the virus. Even though COVID-19 usually affects children less severely than adults, we cannot be sure that the virus does not represent a low risk even to infected children who are having an operation. Studies suggest that *adults* who are infected with coronavirus, but have not yet developed symptoms and go ahead with an operation, can become extremely unwell. We simply do not know whether this might also apply to children, although there is little evidence that this is likely.

We are asking our patients, and their households, to confirm that for two weeks before their surgery, they have not had any symptoms or been exposed to anyone with known or suspected COVID-19. Coronavirus screening will be carried out about 3 days before the operation.

No surgery or anaesthetic comes without risk, but in this current climate, it is important that you understand that although the chance of serious complications remains low in children, it is certainly higher now, because of the incidence of COVID-19 infection in our community.

For *adults* having surgery at the RUH, we are asking them to self-isolate for 14-day period before their surgery, as they are at higher risk from COVID-19 infection. National guidelines do *not* recommend this for children and at the RUH, we agree with this. If you and your child would prefer to self-isolate, then of course this is acceptable. In very rare circumstances, for example in certain medical conditions, we may insist on a period of self-isolation for your child, but we will inform you if that is the case. In all situations, your child will still need their swab test performed about 3 days before surgery, as above.

We are doing everything we can to minimise the risks including use of appropriate PPE, social distancing, regular monitoring and early testing.

If you have any questions on these arrangements or if you decide you **do not** want to go ahead with your child's operation at this time, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can book another child into that slot.

### To contact us

<b>Monday to Friday 09.00 – 16.30</b>	Children's Outpatients Nurse	01225 824216
<b>Out of hours</b>	Children's Ward	01225 824421



## Screening for COVID-19

- About 2-3 weeks before your child's surgery, we will phone you to carry out a regular pre-operative assessment questionnaire, to enable us to find out more about your child's health and wellbeing
- About 3 days before your child's operation date, your child will need to attend the RUH for swabbing for COVID-19; we will contact you to let you know the time and arrangements for this. We will also repeat some questions about your child's & family's recent health and any possible exposure to COVID-19
- Wherever possible, attend the hospital in your own family car, ideally driven by a household member. If you are unable to get to the RUH in your own family car, please ring 01225 824216 to discuss alternatives. Unless there is no other option, please *do not attend by public transport or a taxi*.

## COVID-19 results

- The swab result may take up to **48 hours** to come back
- You will be phoned by us as soon as it is available, to confirm whether your child's surgery can take place or not.
- **If the swab is negative:** If your child and all members of the household have remained well throughout the previous 14 days, your child's surgery will go ahead. Details of exactly where to come to and when, will be given to you in this phone call.
- **If your swab is positive:** Unfortunately your child's surgery must be postponed & rescheduled. You and your child may be asked to undergo a period of self-isolation and further swabbing. We will of course explain the details of the process to you at this point: each case must be considered individually by your team in consultation with specialist doctors in microbiology.

If, at any time **in the 14 days before surgery**, you or any family member become unwell, please let us know soon as possible by ringing Children's Outpatients on 01225 824216 Monday to Friday 09.00 - 16.30, out of hours please call the Children's Ward on 01225 82442.

If you are concerned, please also discuss with your GP or NHS 111.