

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – information for children, young people and families from the Complex Asthma team

We understand that you might be worried about coronavirus – also known as COVID-19 – particularly if your child has asthma. This information sheet from the Complex Asthma team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) sets out our advice for children and young people who use our services.

Please read this alongside our general FAQs for families at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-FAQ. You can also find the latest news, information and resources in our COVID-19 information hub at gosh.nhs.uk/coronavirus-hub.

This information comes from the Government guidance, The British Thoracic Society and Asthma UK and has been approved by the clinical team at GOSH.

Does COVID-19 affect children?

The evidence to date shows that although children do develop COVID-19 very few children will develop severe infection with COVID-19. People who have severe asthma and become unwell due to COVID-19 should inform their local hospital asthma team.

Social distancing and shielding

Please ensure that you and your family are following national advice on social distancing and precautions to avoid infection.

If you or your child have received a letter and/or text message from the government, stating that you should follow shielding advice, then please

follow this advice carefully. You can read more on shielding at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-FAQ and we have written some special guidance to clarify what shielding means for you and your child, available at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-and-vulnerable-children.

Currently the shielding advice is valid until 30th June 2020 when it will be reviewed in line with the government guidelines.

You can find the latest guidance from Asthma UK at asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/

Keeping well during the coronavirus pandemic

For children with well-controlled asthma, there is no evidence to say they are at higher risk of catching COVID-19.

We would therefore like you to follow this guidance to keep your asthma as well controlled as possible during this time.



- **Keep taking your medicine.** Make sure that you are extremely strict with taking your preventer medications every day and have a spare at home so that you do not run out. Not taking these medications could make your asthma worse. This includes adhering to any medication such as antihistamines and nasal sprays. This will help to keep your asthma as well controlled as possible and prevent an asthma attack. There is currently no evidence to say that taking inhaled corticosteroids increases the risk of getting COVID-19.
- **Use your spacer.** Your medication is more effective if you use your spacer. You must also make sure you are using the correct technique. If you are unsure you can find helpful guidance at www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/ Make sure you are cleaning your spacer regularly and not sharing the device or medications with any family members. You can find cleaning instructions at asthma.org.uk/advice/inhalers-medicines-treatments/inhalers-and-spacers/spacers/#cleanspacer
- **Know your asthma action plan.** This will tell you what medication you should be taking daily and your escalation plan. This will also help you to identify your triggers and concerning symptoms that may require you to seek medical help.
- **Food allergies.** If you have any food allergies please ensure that you have in-date medication and are aware of how to administer this as per your BSCAI allergy action plan. For a reminder of the administration technique, select the appropriate device at www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/adrenaline-auto-injector-anaphylaxis-0
- **Carry your inhaler.** Ensure you carry your reliever inhaler (usually blue-salbutamol) and spacer with you at all times and ensure that you have a spare.
- **Reduce triggers.** Take all necessary steps to reduce any triggers that might cause an asthma attack.
- **Check your symptoms.** Monitor your symptoms and know how to treat them. You can keep a symptom diary and if appropriate include your peak flow scores.
- **Seek advice if required.** If your asthma symptoms are getting worse and you are using your salbutamol inhaler more than usual, please seek advice over the phone or online from your family doctor (GP) or asthma team at GOSH. If you are concerned that you are having an exacerbation that requires a course of oral steroids, please seek advice over the phone or online from your GP or local asthma team.
- **In case of an emergency** call 999 or go to your local A&E or urgent care centre as you usually would.

Should we make alternative clinic appointments?

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 appointment, we will be in contact with you to discuss whether this can be carried out remotely.

If we think your child needs to come to GOSH for a face-to-face assessment, please be assured that we will be following all the infection control guidelines, as well as reducing waiting times and the number of patients in Outpatient areas. Please read our information sheet for Outpatients at gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-outpatients.

Visit gosh.nhs.uk/covid-19-FAQ for more information about changes to our services and what to expect if you're coming to GOSH.



Further information and support

If you need to contact the Complex Asthma Team, please call us on 020 7405 9200 ext 5914 or 07740 545 041 or email gosh-tr.complexasthma@nhs.net

Information from the NHS at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Information for children is available on the BBC Newsround website at www.bbc.co.uk/newsround

