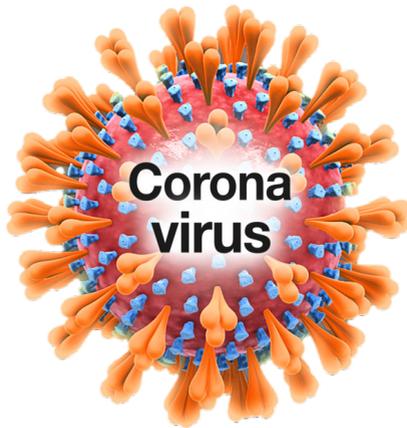


INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR PATIENTS



COVID-19 and
Your admission
to The Ulster Independent Clinic

Accredited by



THE ULSTER INDEPENDENT CLINIC

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WELCOME

TO THE ULSTER INDEPENDENT CLINIC

If you are reading this information booklet then you are coming into the Ulster Independent Clinic for elective surgery during a time when there is a high level of Covid-19 virus. This booklet will help you to understand what to expect, from comprehensive social distancing and hand hygiene measures prior to surgery through to discharge and ongoing care. Having an operation can be a worrying experience, but learning more about what to expect often helps to overcome the fear of the unknown.

What is Covid-19 (Coronavirus)?

Covid -19 is an airborne virus that is thought to spread person-to-person via respiratory aerosols produced when a person coughs or sneezes, or between people who are in close contact with each other (around 6 feet or less). It may be possible to get Covid-19 by touching a surface or object contaminated by droplets, and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way that the virus is spread.

The main symptoms are:

- A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back, OR
- A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough it may be worse than usual), OR
- A loss or a change in sense of smell or taste.

Individuals may not have all of the symptoms or may be similar to symptoms of the cold or flu. Symptoms may vary for different age groups or with different variants of the virus.

What is my risk of getting Covid-19 while in hospital?

It is currently not possible to entirely eliminate the risk of catching Covid-19 while in hospital.

However, the Ulster Independent Clinic is taking every possible measure to minimise your risk of infection.

This includes training Clinic staff on how to limit the spread of the virus through frequent hand-washing and social distancing within the Clinic; regular cleaning; increased provision of hand sanitiser units; use of personal protective equipment (PPE); testing staff and patients for Covid-19, and excluding any staff or patient who has a positive Covid-19 test or a 'positive' symptom from entering the facility.

How should I prepare for my operation?

Adults scheduled for elective surgery under anaesthetic (general, regional and local) and sedation

All patients coming into the Clinic for a planned procedure will be asked to follow comprehensive social distancing, hand hygiene measures and carry out lateral flow tests at home prior to admission as detailed below.

Lateral flow tests are available from your local pharmacy or online. The tests can be ordered from the following website, **www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests** where you will be asked to confirm that you are eligible to order them. Patients are eligible because of being asked by a healthcare professional to carry out these tests.

Patients should carry out lateral flow tests as follows:

- First LFT should be carried out 48 hours before date of admission
- Second LFT should be carried out 24 hours before date of admission
- Third LFT will be carried out when you are admitted to the Clinic.

How should I prepare for my operation?

Instructions for carrying out a lateral flow test can be found at:
www.gov.uk/guidance/Covid-19-self-test-help

The results of your lateral flow test (whether negative or positive) must be reported online each day at:
www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

When results have been reported you will receive a text message or e-mail confirmation, which you will need to have available to show to your admitting nurse as proof of your Covid-19 status.

If any of the lateral flow test results are positive, or you develop Covid-19 symptoms, you must inform us immediately. Please **do not** attend the Clinic.

In order to minimise the risks to you, other patients, and our staff, we ask that you undertake a period of self-isolation for the 48 hours after carrying out the first LFT, until time of admission to the Clinic. This means staying at home, you should not go to work or go shopping, attend large gatherings, use public transport (unless absolutely necessary to come for your admission), or invite people into your home.

If you are having a general anaesthetic and have had Covid-19 in the 7 weeks prior to your appointment please contact us on 028 90687666 (Mon-Fri 08.30-18.00) or 028 90661212 (at the weekend).

Children scheduled for elective surgery

- The instructions detailed above regarding undertaking lateral flow tests before admission should be followed for both the child undergoing a procedure and their accompanying parent / carer.
- The results of the lateral flow tests for both the child and accompanying parent / carer will need to be shown to the nurse on admission.
- Both the child and accompanying parent / carer are strongly advised to self-isolate for the 48 hours after carrying out the first LFT, until time of admission to the Clinic.
- If there is any difference to the above guidance you will be advised by your Consultant.

How to protect yourself and others

Social distancing & hand hygiene measures

What is comprehensive social distancing?

- Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others at all times where possible, including other patients and staff during your stay.
- If meeting indoors you should limit the duration of visits, ensure good ventilation and maintain good hand hygiene.
- A mask or face covering must be worn when entering the Hospital building.

What is good hand hygiene?

- Don't cough into your hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, not your hand, when you cough or sneeze.
- Bin used tissues straight away – don't hold onto them.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash your hands with lots of soap and water.
- Use the hand sanitiser points throughout the Clinic.

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation is to protect you from the risks associated with Covid-19. It is very important that you take self-isolating seriously. You can isolate as a household, meaning that you and everyone in the household stay at home and follow the guidelines. Or you can isolate yourself within the home from the rest of the family, including your pets.

You should:

- Stay at home.
- Ask friends or family members to bring you things you need such as medication and groceries or use delivery services for shopping which must be left outside your home for you to collect.
- Separate yourself from others with the door closed or practise social distancing where possible.
- Stay away from vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and those with underlying conditions as much as possible.

Self-isolation

- Stay in a well-ventilated room with a window that can be opened to keep air moving.
- Sleep alone, if possible.
- Clean toilets / bathrooms after use if you share them with others (wiping surfaces you have come into contact with every time).
- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water.
- Use separate towels from others in the household at all times.
- Stay in touch with others over the phone or through social media.

You should not:

- Go to work or go shopping, attend large gatherings, use public transport (unless absolutely necessary for your admission), or invite people into your home.
- Go outside unless you have access to your own garden.

Should I tell the Clinic before I come in for my procedure if I have had contact with a person with Covid-19?

Yes. It is important to contact the Clinic so that further details can be taken. A decision can then be made based on the urgency of your procedure. Even though this may cause a delay in your surgery, in most cases it will be much safer to rule out Covid-19 than to go ahead when you may have it.

If you have any symptoms of Covid-19 or a positive LFT result prior to attending a Clinic appointment, please **do not** attend, and contact the Clinic for advice.

Will my surgery go ahead if I have Covid-19?

If you have, or are thought to have Covid-19, your operation will only take place if it is a very urgent or emergency procedure and you consent to it, after discussing the risk with the healthcare team. Some types of surgery carry considerable additional risks for patients with Covid-19.

What will happen when I am admitted to the Ulster Independent Clinic?

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When you are in the Clinic you may be asked to wear a mask or other type of personal protective equipment (PPE), and most staff will be wearing some kind of PPE too. Depending on the area in the Clinic, this could be a mask, visor or goggles, a plastic apron or gowns / coveralls. It will most likely mean that the faces of those treating you will be covered. Please do not let this stop you communicating with staff as normal. If you find it difficult to hear or understand what is being said through the PPE, please make staff aware, so that they take this into account and provide alternative ways of communicating with you.

Covid-19 questionnaire, check of LFT results, temperature check and consent form

On arrival at the Ulster Independent Clinic all patients and anyone accompanying them will be asked to complete a Covid-19 questionnaire before leaving Main Reception. Once the nurse has taken you to your room, you will be asked to show the results of the LFTs carried out before admission (these may be in the form of a text message, or e-mail confirmation), a final LFT will be carried out, and your temperature checked. If there are any concerns at this stage the patient may be sent home, and the procedure rebooked for a later date. Your surgeon will also ask you to complete a Covid-19 consent form once he / she has explained the risks associated with surgery and Covid-19.

Visitors and other information

In the interests of everyone's safety, and to reduce the transmission of coronavirus, the following arrangements have been put in place.

Visiting will be by prior arrangement, in consultation with the clinical manager, and in accordance with current Department of Health guidance. Visitors are encouraged to carry out a lateral flow test before attending.

On arrival, patients may be accompanied to Main Reception by one person, where a Covid-19 questionnaire will be completed. You will then be accompanied to your room by a member of nursing staff.

During your stay you are encouraged to use telephone and video calls to communicate with relatives and friends. Before coming into the Clinic consider how you will communicate with your family and friends, and make sure you have the equipment to do this and you know how to use it.

If you would like to read a newspaper or magazine during your stay, please bring one with you as this service cannot currently be provided.

Information for parents / carers of children having surgery at the Clinic

Pre-operative isolation

Both children and their accompanying parent / carer must undertake lateral flow tests and self-isolate as detailed earlier in this booklet.

Parents / carers are more likely than their child to be infected with Covid-19. For this reason, strict measures have been put in place to reduce the spread of infection between adults. When your child is in hospital, parents / carers will be expected to:

- Wear a mask or face covering when away from your child's bedside.
- Observe social distancing.
- Undertake regular hand washing, including when entering and leaving wards.
- Use the hand sanitiser points through the Clinic.

Your child will not be expected to wear a face covering but they are welcome to do so if they wish.

Day case procedures

One parent / carer will be allowed to accompany their child into the Clinic for their operation.

Information for parents / carers staying with children during their stay in the Clinic

Inpatient procedures (when your child needs to stay in the Clinic after their operation)

- Only one parent / carer will be able to accompany their child into the Clinic for their operation.
- If parents / carers are from two different households, then only one will be able to stay with them until they have gone to sleep for their operation.
- If you develop symptoms of Covid-19 at any point (high temperature, new continuous cough, or loss / change in sense of smell or taste), you must immediately let a member of staff know and leave the Clinic as soon as possible.

You and your family must comply with social distancing recommendations at all times.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

Discharge home and ongoing care

When being discharged from the Clinic, a member of staff will accompany you to the main entrance where you can be met by your family / carer for your return home. You should always follow all the instructions given to you regarding medication and post-operative recovery contained in your discharge advice leaflet. You will be given a contact number for the Clinic where you can seek advice if you have **any** concerns following discharge. Should you develop any Covid-19 symptoms after discharge, please follow Public Health Agency (PHA) advice.

Follow up appointments - before you leave the Clinic, you may be given a follow up appointment; this may be conducted by telephone to reduce the risk of infection.

On admission you will be asked to sign a Covid-19 Risk Informed Consent form, as below. It is important that you read this carefully prior to attending for your surgery.

ULSTER INDEPENDENT CLINIC RISK INFORMED CONSENT

COVID-19, a new virus, is currently causing a high level of infection around the world (also known as a pandemic). This virus spreads by person to person contact. In most cases the infection is mild but a small significant number of those who become very ill develop serious complications including death.

There is also a limited amount of evidence that some patients who develop a COVID-19 infection immediately before, during or after surgery may be at risk of developing these serious complications. These complications seem to occur more often in men, people aged over seventy, people having cancer surgery and people with significant medical problems. They also occur more often in people having emergency operations and in patients undergoing major surgery.

The Ulster Independent Clinic will minimise the risk of contracting COVID-19 using the following measures:

- self-isolation before surgery
- testing for the presence of the virus prior to surgery
- screening questionnaire
- temperature check
- maintaining social distancing
- minimising visiting
- strict adherence to hygiene precautions
- following the latest government advice

Despite these measures there is no guarantee that any patient undergoing surgery will not catch COVID-19 before their admission, during their stay in hospital or when recovering afterwards at home. For example, the tests used before surgery will not show the presence of the virus in a small number of people who actually have it.

- I have self-isolated for ____ days as instructed by my Consultant.
- I understand that a negative COVID-19 test before my operation does not guarantee that I do not have the virus.
- I understand that I am at risk of developing a COVID-19 infection at the time of or after my surgery and that this may lead to further complications.
- I understand that all the risks associated with COVID-19 infection are not known yet.
- I have been offered the opportunity to postpone my surgery.
- I agree that the Ulster Independent Clinic may contact me following my surgery as part of an ongoing audit about COVID-19 and that this information will be kept in the strictest confidence.



We hope that this information booklet has been a useful guide. You will, of course, have the opportunity to discuss any aspect of the surgery with your surgeon and anaesthetist before proceeding.

If you would like any additional information about The Ulster Independent Clinic, please visit:

ulsterindependentclinic.com

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