

[Patient Name

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

June 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

Your NHS number: [NHS NUMBER]

Dear [Patient],

IMPORTANT ADVICE TO KEEP YOU SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

Your safety and the continued provision of the care and treatment you need is a priority for the NHS. This letter gives you advice on how to protect yourself and access the care and treatment you need.

The NHS has newly identified you, or the named person you care for, as someone who may be at risk of severe illness if you catch Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19). This is likely to be because you have only recently been diagnosed as having an underlying disease or health condition that means if you catch the virus, you are more likely to be admitted to hospital than others.

The Government's advice is that the safest course of action is for you to stay at home as much as possible and keep visits outdoors to a minimum (for instance once per day) and maintain social distance of at least 2 metres at all times. The Government is currently advising people to shield until 30th June 2020 and is regularly monitoring this position. This will protect you by stopping you from coming into contact with the virus. **The exception is carers and healthcare workers who you must see as part of your medical care.**

Shielding is for your personal protection and it's your choice to decide whether to follow the measures advised by the Government. You will not be fined or sanctioned if you prefer to follow the [guidance on staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#). You may also choose to remain in your own home at all times, if you do not feel comfortable with any form of contact with others. However, careful time outside in the fresh air is likely to make you feel better in yourself.

The latest government shielding guidance can be found at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. The Government is regularly reviewing this guidance and most recently updated it on 31st May. The next review of this guidance will take place the week commencing 15th June 2020, after which you will be written to with information on updated shielding advice.

Please discuss your daily needs during this period with carers, family, friends, neighbours or local community groups to see how they can support you.

This letter is evidence, for your employer, to show that you cannot work outside the home. You do not need to get a fit note from your GP. If you need help from the benefit system visit <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

It is also to inform you that the Government is supporting those at highest clinical risk in need of essential supplies. Please go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable to register your current situation, even if you do not need additional help right now. You'll be asked for your NHS number in order to register, which you can find at the top of this letter. If you have already registered, and are receiving the support you require, then there is no need to register again. If you cannot sign up on the website, you can register via the Government's automated line on 0800 028 8327. If you are having problems registering, we advise that you check your NHS number and try again.

The Government is helping pharmacies to deliver prescriptions. Prescriptions will continue to cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not currently have your prescriptions collected or delivered, you can arrange this by:

1. Asking someone who can pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy, (this is the best option, if possible);
2. Contacting your pharmacy to ask them to help you find a volunteer (who will have been ID checked) or deliver it to you.

You may also need to arrange for collection or delivery of hospital specialist medication that is prescribed to you by your hospital care team.

You will still get the medical care you need during this period. If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, such as a new, continuous cough, a high temperature (above 37.8 °C), and/or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste, seek clinical advice using the NHS 111 online coronavirus service (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>). If you do not have access to the internet, call NHS 111. **Do this as soon as you get symptoms.**

If you do not have anyone who can support you, NHS Volunteer Responders are here for you. They can help with picking up shopping, prescriptions, or any other essentials you need. They're also on hand if you'd like a friendly chat or just want someone to talk to. Call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm) to arrange volunteer support. Further details about the programme, and the support available can be found by visiting online: nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk

For further information about how to get food and other essential supplies, please read the guidance on accessing food and essential supplies. If you urgently need food or care, contact your local council.

We understand that this may be a worrying time and you may find staying at home and having limited contact frustrating. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, which can make you feel worse. Simple things you can do to stay mentally and physically active during this time include:

- look for ideas for exercises to do at home on the NHS website
- spend time doing things you enjoy – reading, cooking and other indoor hobbies
- try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs
- try spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight. Get out into the garden or sit on your doorstep if you can, keeping a distance of at least 2 metres from others.

You can find additional advice and support from [Every Mind Matters](#) and the [NHS mental health and wellbeing](#) advice website.

Further information on coronavirus, including guidance from Public Health England, can be found on the [nhs.uk](#)¹ and [gov.uk](#)² websites.

Yours sincerely,

[Clinician]

[Practice Phone no]

List of diseases and conditions considered to be very high risk:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients
2. People with specific cancers
 - People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
 - People with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
 - People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
4. People with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
6. People who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

More detail on the list can be found at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list#risk-criteria>

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>