

## NEWS RELEASE

18 September 2020

### Concerned about Coronavirus? Hertfordshire's top doctors team up to provide COVID-19 advice

Hertfordshire's lead GPs - Dr Prag Moodley and Dr Nicolas Small - have teamed up to provide answers for some common dilemmas facing people concerned about COVID-19.

Subjects tackled include advice on how to tell the difference between the symptoms of a cold and COVID-19, what to do if you can't get a test, and sources of support and help if you have symptoms or need to self-isolate.

Dr Nicolas Small, the lead GP for Herts Valleys CCG said: "We know that people want to do the right thing to protect their own families and help keep workplaces, businesses, schools and nurseries open for everyone. Problems with getting a test have been well publicised and although more lab capacity is coming this will take a few weeks. To help the public, we have brought together some practical advice."

Dr Prag Moodley, the lead GP for East and North Hertfordshire CCG added: "As the father of school-aged children and a GP looking after elderly and vulnerable patients, I understand the anxiety that the growing number of coronavirus cases is causing. We hope that these questions and answers can give some clarity to anyone who is worried or confused."

The comprehensive, easy to read information will appear on the websites of local health organisations, be promoted on social media and will be shared with organisations across the county. The advice will be updated as necessary.

See the full Q&A below. Alternatively, go straight to <https://www.healthierfuture.org.uk/news/2020/september/concerned-about-coronavirus-your-questions-answered> or go to [www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk](http://www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk) or [www.hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk](http://www.hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk) and search 'COVID-19 advice'

**ENDS**

#### *Notes to Editors*

- 1. To contact the East and North Hertfordshire CCG press office, please ring 01707 685140 or email [enhertscq.communications@nhs.net](mailto:enhertscq.communications@nhs.net)*
- 2. To contact the Herts Valleys CCG communications team, [communications.hvccg@nhs.net](mailto:communications.hvccg@nhs.net) or phone 01442 898888*
- 3. Led by local GPs, Clinical Commissioning Groups plan, design and buy health services for the population of Hertfordshire, and monitor the quality and effectiveness of those services.*
- 4. If you live in east and north Hertfordshire and would like to help shape your local health services, please visit [www.enhertscq.nhs.uk/get-involved](http://www.enhertscq.nhs.uk/get-involved)*

## Concerned about Coronavirus?

### Your questions answered

#### The coronavirus and protecting yourself from it

##### How can I protect myself from the virus?

The best ways we know to protect ourselves are by; washing your hands regularly or using sanitiser if there's no soap and water, keeping your distance from people whenever possible, wearing a face covering where required or advised, and being alert to potential coronavirus symptoms in ourselves and others.

##### What are the most common symptoms of coronavirus?

Typical coronavirus symptoms are: a high temperature; a new continuous cough; or a change to or loss of sense of taste or smell. A high temperature or fever is usually considered to be a temperature of 38C or above. See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/> for more details about coronavirus symptoms.

If you don't have a thermometer you can usually tell if someone has a high temperature if they:

- feel hotter than usual to touch on their forehead, back or stomach
- feel sweaty or clammy
- have flushed cheeks

##### How can I tell if I have coronavirus or a cold?

If you are not sure whether you or your child's symptoms suggest that they have coronavirus or an everyday cough or cold, you can consult this online NHS symptom checker, which has been designed to help you to tell the difference. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

Children often pick up colds and bugs after returning to school, but a runny nose or sore throat are not associated with COVID-19.

#### Testing

##### I think I need a coronavirus test. How can I get one?

If you have any of the coronavirus symptoms, try to arrange a test straight away. If you can access the internet, go to <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Do not try to book a test if you haven't got symptoms. Tests are only for those with symptoms and you would be making it harder for people with symptoms to get the test they need.

##### What if I can't get online?

If you can't get online, or have trouble using websites, you can try the telephone test booking number, which is 119. However, the telephone service doesn't have access to any more tests than the online booking system. If there are no appointments online, calling 119 will not help.

### **I have symptoms but I haven't been able to get a test. What should I do?**

We know that many people all over the country are having problems booking a test and we understand how frustrating this is. Do keep trying, as new testing slots are added regularly during the day.

### **Can I get a test from my GP, hospital or by turning up to a test site and joining the queue?**

No. The only way for members of the public to get a test anywhere is to use the booking service. Your GP does not have any COVID tests and they cannot diagnose COVID-19 in an appointment. Going to a GP practice with symptoms endangers others and could cause the practice to close. Hospitals only have a very limited number of tests for patients about to have planned treatments, or waiting to be discharged from hospital – you can't get a test in an A&E department. If you turn up at a testing site without an appointment, staff cannot and will not test you.

### **I haven't been able to get a COVID test, but I have symptoms. What should I do?**

If you have COVID symptoms but haven't been able to get a test within 5 days of your symptoms developing, you should act as if you have the virus and follow the self-isolation guidance. You must not leave your home for 10 days and anyone in your household or support bubble who hasn't got symptoms must stay at home too, for 14 days. This is in case they go on to develop symptoms as well. If people in your household go on to develop symptoms, they should try to get a test too. Detailed government advice on staying at home can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection> If you need to get food or other essential supplies during your isolation, please ask a friend or a family member who doesn't live with you to get them for you.

### **How can I look after myself if I have COVID-19, or the symptoms of the virus?**

There is currently no specific treatment for coronavirus, but you can often ease the symptoms at home until you recover, using the advice on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-to-treat-symptoms-at-home/>

If your symptoms get worse and you are worried, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>. If you don't have access to the internet, you can ring NHS 111. If you have a long-term health condition and you are worried about the impact of your coronavirus symptoms on your health, contact your GP surgery online or on the phone.

## **Children and coronavirus**

### **My child doesn't have symptoms but has been sent home from school because someone in their school 'bubble' has coronavirus. What should I do?**

Our schools, colleges and early years settings are working hard to try to ensure that pupils and staff are protected and to stop the virus spreading. This means that children in the same group, class, or year as someone with a confirmed case of coronavirus are being asked to self-isolate, even if they don't have symptoms. Although this is tough on children and families, this should slow down the rate at which the virus is spreading in our area. Here's what self-isolation means for a child or young person and their household members:

- Self-isolation means they must **not** leave their home for 14 days because they might have been exposed to Covid-19. It can take 14 days for symptoms to develop

- Your child(ren) should not leave the house and **cannot** visit family, friends or attend any activities or parties, even if these are outdoors. They **cannot** go out to exercise, use public transport or taxis, even if they wear a mask.
- Being sent home does not mean that your child(ren) has coronavirus and you should not book a test for your child(ren), unless they develop symptoms
- Other members of your household will **not** be expected to self-isolate due to child(ren) being sent home in a school bubble **unless** the child develops symptoms, in which case the rules on testing and self-isolation apply above.
- If your child(ren) develops symptoms while self-isolating at home, your entire household must self-isolate immediately and you should try to book a test for those with symptoms. You should check the period of self-isolation which applies here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>

## Isolation

### **My employer has asked me to get an isolation note. How can I get one?**

If you have been asked to get an isolation note from your employer, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>. There is no need to call your GP and you must not visit your GP practice.

### **My child has a runny nose. Do I need a doctor's note to say they can attend school?**

Children often have runny noses. You do not need a note from your doctor to send your child to school if they have a sniffle.

### **How will I manage if I have to isolate?**

If you are worried about how you will manage with shopping, getting prescriptions or managing financially when you are isolating, go to this website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/help-and-financial-support-while-youre-self-isolating/>

**ENDS**