

How are you? Really, how are you? This is a difficult and challenging time for everyone for similar and different reasons. Life has completely changed and there is uncertainty of what is to come, which can be uncomfortable and stressful. We are aware that you may have many questions at this time and hope that this information provides some help and guidance.

What is Coronavirus or COVID-19?

This is a new virus which causes some symptoms similar to seasonal flu, but also behaves very differently. The virus spreads mainly through droplets from sneezing, coughing, or when people interact closely (usually less than a metre) for some length of time.. The incubation period (the time from catching the virus to getting symptoms) is estimated to be up to 14 days, and we are most at risk of spreading the virus in the 24 hours before, and when our symptoms first start.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a new cough – coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough it may be worse than usual)
- a high temperature – feeling hot to touch on your chest or back
- shortness of breath

The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

For the latest information about the Coronavirus please visit: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

What should you do if you think you have Coronavirus?

If you think you might have Coronavirus

- **DO NOT ATTEND THE SURGERY**
- Stay at home, go online and visit <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> to access the Coronavirus symptom checker or call 111.

How do we stop the virus spreading?

The government and NHS have now advised the following measures which will help to reduce the spread of the virus and help the NHS services in being able to manage the number of patients needing care

Stay at home

You should only leave the house for limited purposes

- Shopping for essentials such as food or medicine and doing as infrequently as possible
- One form of exercise per day, alone or with members of your household
- Any Medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape injury or harm, or to provide care to help a vulnerable person
- Travelling for work purposes, only where you cannot work from home

Social Distancing

It is very important that if you do go out, you keep a distance at least 2metres apart from anyone outside of your household to help avoid the spread

How We Are Helping You

- Appointments – we are now all operating a phone triage service to assess all patients and consider whether a face to face review is required. We can use video consultations and photos via email if this is needed. This minimises the risk of patients leaving their homes, reduces numbers in the waiting rooms and protects our staff. Please do not attend the surgery unless you have a pre-arranged appointment.
- Prescriptions – These are being processed as normal and taken directly to the Much Wenlock Pharmacy twice a day. We ask that you do not order more medications than you need to ensure that stock is maintained at normal levels.
- Scrubs – you may have noticed that the Doctors at the surgeries are now wearing scrubs. This is to improve infection control and help reducing the risk of transmission.

How You Can Help You

- Exercise – take daily exercise unless you are unwell or advised not to due to your risk group, for example a walk, cycle or run, and home exercises are also helpful for maintaining your muscle strength and balance. Regular exercise will support your immune system, help with your mental health and well-being, and is also good for your lung function.
- Diet – keep a simple well balanced diet with all major food groups. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables will ensure the body gets enough vitamins and minerals. Fish, nuts and tofu are good sources of protein and micronutrients which are involved in immune function. Vitamin D is also involved and can be found in oily fish, and probiotics found in cultured yoghurts and dairy products can also give some support.
- Fluids – reducing alcohol intake and ensuring there is at least one alcohol free day per week will help your body. It is important to stay hydrated for general health, but saliva also has antimicrobial properties.
- Smoking – this is considered an “extra vulnerability”, and now is a really good time to stop, improving the health of your lungs and their ability to fight and recover from the virus.
- Wash your hands regularly, use a tissue for coughing and sneezing and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

How You Can Help Others

- Keep your distance – if you have to go out make sure you stay that 2m apart to prevent possible spread of the virus
- Stay connected – keep in touch with your family and friends, check in on any people you know who may be vulnerable or have little support
- Social Media Groups – set up or join a social media group or messaging service to help people in your local community stay in touch with each other
- Volunteer – there are lots of community groups helping to deliver medicine, collect shopping and support vulnerable people in other ways (<https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups>)

A Special Thank You

A huge thank you to all our patients and local communities who are supporting the Practice and patients by providing equipment such as scrubs, masks/safety glasses and organising the collection of medications for their local communities. We have also received a number of offers of help from individual patients, whom we have directed to the various volunteer groups that have been set up, and it has been extremely heartening to receive the kind words and thanks from you when you have contact with the Practice. It is a difficult and stressful time for us all and it makes all the difference to our day to receive your support.



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♥ **save lives**