

- Do not arrive more than five minutes before your appointment.
- Please do not attend if you have Covid-19 symptoms unless you have a current negative test (PCR / lateral flow).
- In outpatient clinics, we have introduced 'virtual' telephone appointments to reduce physical attendance to facilitate social distancing. ('Face to face' appointments are always still available if needed.)
- You can bring someone with you but your doctor will decide the number of people who enter the clinic room.

Staff

All Trust staff regularly test for Covid-19 by PCR and lateral flow testing and staff who have had Covid-19 follow guidelines for returning to work. There has been a comprehensive vaccination programme for staff at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Personal Protective Equipment will be worn as per NHS guidelines in all areas.

West & King Edward Ward Day Units

Currently all patients are doing a lateral flow test and we are allowing visitors on the wards except under exceptional circumstances if they have tested as well. This will be reviewed as Covid-19 cases continue to change nationally.

Adelaide Ward

We may have restricted visiting and the guidance will change depending on the level of Covid-19 infections in the community and within the hospital. **Please ask the ward team for up to date advice.**

If you think you have Covid-19...

It is very important that you do a lateral flow straight away and if positive a PCR if you think you have Covid-19 as treatments are available but they work best if started quickly. As a highly vulnerable person, you should have received a PCR test from the NHS. (If not please contact your GP.) If you don't have one, book a test on the [NHS website](#) or contact your CNS or doctor for help. Make sure that your diagnosis is recorded. If you test positive, you will be contacted about Covid-19 treatments.

Please also let your hospital team know. For further information, please see the [UK government website](#).

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Haematology/Oncology, June 2022
Next review due: June 2024



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Covid-19

Information for
oncology and
haematology patients

This leaflet provides information on Covid-19 for patients having haematology and oncology (cancer) treatment. Please ask your doctor if you have further concerns about Covid-19.

What is Covid-19?

Covid-19 is an infection caused by the Covid-19 coronavirus. The disease it causes varies in severity from person to person but if you have one of a number of underlying health conditions, you are more likely to be considered highly vulnerable to having a very severe infection with Covid-19.

Which haematology / oncology patients are at high risk?

- Those with a blood cancer such as leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma even if you have never needed treatment and are on 'watch and wait'.
- Those with a weakened immune system due to a treatment such as steroid medicine, biological therapy – drugs with '-mab' at the end, chemotherapy or radiotherapy.
- Those who have had biological, chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment in the last two years, even if you are now in remission.
- Those who have had bone marrow or organ transplant at any time in the past.

- Those with condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections.

If you have any of these conditions please make sure that your GP practice is aware.

How can you protect yourself?

- The first line of defence is to take simple precautions, such as wearing a face mask. If wearing a surgical disposable mask don't wear it for more than a morning or afternoon before throwing it away. They also lose effectiveness if they get wet. Make sure you wear it over the nose and mouth and try not to touch it while you are wearing it. Even if other people have stopped wearing masks, wearing one still provides you with protection.
- Wash your hands when you get back to your house.
- Avoid people who are unwell and try to avoid crowded places.

Vaccines

Vaccines are a very effective way of preventing serious Covid-19 infection. There are currently three types of vaccine available: the Astra Zeneca vaccine, which is made using traditional methods; and the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, which are messenger RNA vaccines (mRNA). Unfortunately, people with cancer or weakened immune systems do not respond to the vaccine as well as other people. This

means that you will require more doses of the vaccine. Even then, you may not be as well protected.

The government continuously reviews scientific advice and the number and timing of vaccine doses may change at any time. The information is available on the [NHS website](#) or from your GP.

You will also be better protected if your family and friends are vaccinated, as they are then less likely to catch the virus and pass it onto you.

There are no haematology or oncology conditions that will prevent you from having the vaccine.

Patients with idiopathic thrombocytopaenic purpura (ITP) may find that their platelet count drops briefly afterwards; this happens with many vaccines. You may need a blood test to monitor this or to do a blood test if you have any bleeding or bruising.

Past blood clots or having a thrombophilia does not increase the risk of having vaccine induced thrombotic thrombocytopaenia (VITT).

If you are concerned, please discuss with your GP or consultant.

How are we protecting you?

At the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust we are doing all that we can to provide a safe environment for your treatment. We have implemented many changes to allow us to do this and constantly review the situation.