

Old Kilpatrick Medical Practice

Policy regarding self isolation and social distancing for at risk patients

Those identified as higher risk (**category 1** patients, see below) eg >70, pregnant, chronic medical conditions should take additional precautions. This does not mean that they should stay at home and not work for 12 weeks, but rather a risk assessment should be carried out and adaptations made where possible. We would **encourage** these patients to practice **social distancing**. This for example would involve working from home where able (unless essential worker: health/social care/emergency services).

For those in the 'even higher risk' group, see **category 2** patients below, they should be advised to follow **social distancing IN FULL for 12 weeks**. They should consider **social isolation** if able.

Social distancing and protecting older and vulnerable people

Social distancing measures are for everyone. We should all be trying to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Social distancing measures should be used when people are living in their own homes, with or without additional support from friends, family and carers.

Category 1 Patients

Increased risk of severe illness

People who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) should be particularly careful in trying to follow social distancing measures.

This group includes people who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- pregnant
- under 70 with an underlying health condition

Underlying health conditions include:

- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis

- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)

Category 2 Patients

Higher risk of severe illness

There are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

People in this higher risk group include:

- those who have had an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- those with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- those with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- those with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- those with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

If you're in this risk group, further advice will be issued. For now, you should follow the social distancing advice in full.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

They are:

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) - these symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport - when possible, alter your travel times to avoid rush hour
- Work from home, where possible - your employer should support you to do this
- Avoid large gatherings
- Avoid gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars and clubs

- Avoid gatherings with friends and family - keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as far as they can.

If you're over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant, you should follow the above measures as much as you can. Limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family, if possible.

This advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.

Hand washing and respiratory hygiene

To help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19, you should:

- wash your hands more often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser
- wash your hand when you get home or into work, when you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, eat or handle food
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who have symptoms
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and wash your hands
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your home

For more information see **NHS Inform Website**