



## Covid-19 A local GP's perspective

### **Q: What about wearing masks in public places and at Burwell Surgery?**

The government is making it a legal requirement for everyone travelling on public transport to use a face covering from 15<sup>th</sup> June. Also from 15<sup>th</sup> June NHS workers are being asked to wear a mask at all times. **For anyone attending a face-to-face appointment at the Surgery on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> June until further notice, we are asking all visitors to wear a face covering. The face covering MUST cover your nose and mouth; ideally the bottom part of the covering should sit under your chin.**

**If there is any reason why you are not able to wear a face covering, please inform the Receptionist on arrival.**

Please visit our website: [www.theburwellsurgery.co.uk](http://www.theburwellsurgery.co.uk) for further information.

### **Q: What is the state of the pandemic locally?**

In Addenbrooke's during the peak of the pandemic in the second week of April there were just over 30 patients on critical care and around 140 patients on the wards with Coronavirus (representing patients from everywhere not just Burwell).

When I last did an update on 20<sup>th</sup> May there were 14 patients on critical care and 70 patients on the general wards.

As of 8<sup>th</sup> June there were 3 patients on critical care and 29 patients on the general wards.

<b>Addenbrooke's</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>Critical Care</b>	30	14	3
<b>Covid-19 Ward</b>	140	70	29

Huge numbers of staff were redeployed in the hospital and they have started the very complex process of sending the staff back to their usual departments. Other areas of the country are having higher transmission rates than we are (for example the North-West of England). I have heard some rumours that disease modellers in Cambridge University have concerns of a second wave in the autumn but of course no-one really knows what is going to happen next.

### **Change to shielding guidance for those at the highest risk of coronavirus: Will be reviewed, by government Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

For updated guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#what-has-changed>

## **Change to guidance for going outside: As of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020**

This FAQ' cover most of the issues:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do> .

At the moment I think that many of us are weighing up lots of judgements asking ourselves if it is safe to start seeing family and friends. As time goes by it is likely we will be more tempted to sail closer to the wind when it comes to following the guidelines? We need to try to keep the government guidelines clearly in our head when trying to make decisions regarding movement in public places and interacting with those outside of our immediate household contacts. We all need to try and be careful out there!

### **Q: What is happening with antibody testing?**

We have had a number of enquiries regarding requests to have antibody tests (test for immunity to the Coronavirus rather the antigen test which looks for active infection). There was some national communication suggesting that the antibody tests would be available for all patients - about a week ago. This was unfortunately a bit premature. The local labs are not able to offer this test at present. I understand that the local NHS system is working on a plan that will become operational over the next few weeks. I will message again as and when we can offer the test from the practice. As yet the test available is the antigen test available via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

### **Q: Are any routine services now available in the NHS?**

The first routine service to come back online is the hearing aid service so we are now able to refer for these. Some specialities are offering a telephone advice service. Not much else yet. We have a long list of patients that we are waiting to be able to refer. We plan to start a few family planning procedures in the next few weeks (coils and implants) focusing initially on high priority cases.

### **Q: How are cancer referrals going?**

At the peak of the pandemic the referral rates for new cancers dropped to 20% of predicted across the county. The last update that I heard suggested that we were up to 50% of predicted. Whilst this is an improvement, this non-covid impact remains very concerning. Please do contact us if you are concerned that you may have symptoms of cancer.

See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer/symptoms/> for details.

## **Coronavirus and mental health**

I have had quite a few calls from patients recently struggling with many of the psychological impacts of coronavirus. Clearly it has impacted on all of us, from financial impacts, to being stuck at home with the children, changing circumstances with relationships at home and at work. I thought that these tips were helpful:

[https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-ips/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc\\_id=Corona&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlzOGY597w6QIVEO3tCh3LPwMAEAAYAiAAEgle\\_fD\\_BwE](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-ips/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Corona&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlzOGY597w6QIVEO3tCh3LPwMAEAAYAiAAEgle_fD_BwE)

We do understand how difficult it can be. Whilst it has affected everyone to some extent, some people usually through no fault of their own, have unexpectedly been having a very difficult time.

The Cambridgeshire mental health portal has a lot of resources that can be helpful both for adults and children on <https://www.keep-your-head.com/>.

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