

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Important information about the coronavirus (COVID-19)

The NHS in East Berkshire and Public Health England (PHE) are well prepared for outbreaks of new infectious diseases. The NHS has put in place measures to ensure the safety of all patients and NHS staff while also ensuring services are available to the public as normal.

The latest information on symptoms of Coronavirus infection and areas where recent travel may have resulted in a high risk of exposure can be found on nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

NHS 111 has an [online coronavirus service](#) that can tell you if you need medical help and advise you of what to do.

Use this service if:

- **you think you might have coronavirus;**
- **in the last 14 days you've been to a country or area with a high risk of coronavirus;**
- **you've been in close contact with someone with coronavirus.**

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Call [111](#) if you need to speak to someone.

Like the common cold, coronavirus infection usually occurs through close contact with a person with novel coronavirus via cough and sneezes or hand contact. A person can also catch the virus by touching contaminated surfaces if they do not wash their hands.

Testing of suspected coronavirus cases is carried out in line with strict guidelines. This means that suspected cases are kept in isolation, away from public areas of GP surgeries, pharmacies and hospitals and returned home also in isolation. Any equipment that comes into contact with suspected cases are thoroughly cleaned as appropriate. Specific guidance has also been shared with NHS staff to help safeguard them and others. Patients can be reassured that their safety is top priority and they are encouraged to attend all appointments as usual.

Everyone is being reminded to follow Public Health England advice to:

- Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitiser gel.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport. Use a sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.