



Marlow Medical Group

CORONAVIRUS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

(Updated: 3rd June 2020)

- 1) MEDICATION (Page 2)**
- 2) CONTACTING THE SURGERY (Page 4)**
- 3) APPOINTMENTS (Page 5)**
- 4) FIT NOTES (Page 5)**
- 5) HELP WITH SUPPLIES FOR VULNERABLE PATIENTS (Page 6)**
- 6) HELP FOR MEDICALLY AT RISK PATIENTS (Page 8)**
- 7) GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES (Page 9)**
- 6) OTHER GUIDANCE (Inc. Frailty Index Scores) (Page 10)**
- 7) USEFUL LINKS (Page 12)**

1) MEDICATION

How do I order my medication?

- Online at: www.marlowdoctors.co.uk/navigator/request-a-repeat-prescription/ OR via Patient Access.
 - o **It is important that patients make every effort to use these methods to assist our staff in continuing to offer vital services in unprecedented times.**
 - o If you cannot do this yourself, please ask a friend, family member, carer or neighbour to do this on your behalf.
- IF YOU CANNOT USE THE WEBSITE AND NOBODY CAN DO THIS ON YOUR BEHALF - then you should ask your pharmacy to request your medication for you.

How long do I have to wait before I can collect my medication?

- Our usual protocol asks for 3 clear working days between the date of request and the date that you can expect your prescription to be ready for collection from your pharmacy.
- **Due to the current increased demand on community pharmacies we ask that you wait 10 working days if possible before attempting to collect your medication.**
- Urgent prescriptions from the GP will still be dispensed on the day.
- **To allow for this change, patients can currently request prescriptions up to 14 days before they are due.**

Can I order more medication than normal, so I don't have to leave my home again?

- **NO.** If our clinicians provide more medication to some patients, then this leaves less medication for others. This can increase pressure in an already stretched environment in GP practices and pharmacies across the country.
- **Follow national guidance and do not request your prescriptions early or stockpile medications. Our clinicians will not issue medication requests that are not submitted in accordance with our usual repeat prescription procedure.**

When can I order my medications?

- At present, you can order prescriptions **up to 14 days before** they are due, **but no earlier.**
- Please think before requesting medication as to whether it is really necessary; an increase in requests is putting our service and others under huge pressure.
- Prescription requests that are submitted too early will be rejected.

Where can I collect my prescription from?

- If you usually collect your medication directly from the pharmacy, your prescriptions will continue to be sent electronically.
- If you usually collect paper prescriptions, then anything ordered after the 12th March will have been sent electronically to pharmacy nearest to your home address.

I haven't had an inhaler for several years - can I have one now?

Inhalers can be lifesaving for some of our patients. Due to a shortage of inhalers we are reminding patients of their social responsibility and we would like to ask you to confirm that you are CURRENTLY suffering from significant respiratory symptoms and that your request is ESSENTIAL.

UNDER THE NEW HEALTH PROTECTION (CORONAVIRUS) REGULATIONS (2020) IT IS AN OFFENCE TO MAKE A FALSE DECLARATION.

Can I get a 'Rescue Pack'?

We have been made aware of some posts on social media saying that if you have a lung condition, your GP will issue you a 'Rescue Pack' of steroids and antibiotics.

If you're normally advised to have a rescue pack available to treat your lung condition, then it is a good idea to check that you have one. This is recommended for SOME patients with COPD to be used as part of a personal plan. For people with asthma, rescue packs are not recommended as part of their standard treatment plan.

If you are a patient who is not usually issued with a rescue pack then please DO NOT request one.

If you are a patient who is usually issued a rescue pack then please DO NOT request one if you already have one at home.



2) CONTACTING THE SURGERY

I think I need to see a doctor, what should I do?

I have a question about my prescription, what should I do?

I need to discuss ongoing issues that are unrelated to coronavirus (COVID-19), what should I do?

I want to discuss medication, what should I do?

- **Direct non-urgent queries through our website at www.marlowdoctors.co.uk.**
- We understand that not all patients will be able to do this themselves, so where necessary and possible we ask that you assist others by submitting any queries or requests on their behalf.
- Our staff can call you back if they need to discuss your query in greater detail.
- **It is vital that patients use the website for communication where possible.**



3) APPOINTMENTS

I have already booked an appointment with a nurse, can I still come?

- With immediate effect we are not seeing (and are actively cancelling):
 - o B12 Injections
 - o Health Checks
 - o Care and Support Planning
- We will continue to see patients for necessary:
 - o Dressings/abscess packing
 - o Stitches removal
 - o Essential injections e.g. Prostag for cancer patients
 - o Essential monitoring blood tests
 - o Flu and pneumonia vaccinations for at risk patients if required
 - o Cervical Screening

4) FIT/SICK NOTES

How do I get a "Self-Isolation Note" to show my employer?

- Online, directly from NHS 111 at 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note

I have requested a fit/sick note, should I come to the surgery to collect it?

- **NO.** Links to fit/sick notes will be sent to patient mobile phones. These can then be downloaded and printed either from your phone or from your computer.



5) HELP FOR VULNERABLE PATIENTS

I am a vulnerable patient and I'm concerned about getting food and supplies, what can I do?

Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services. If this is not possible, then the public sector, business, charities and the general public are gearing up to help those advised to stay at home. Please discuss your daily needs during this period of staying at home with carers, family, friends, neighbours or local community groups to see how they can support you. Please visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable to register for the support that you need. This includes help with food, shopping deliveries and additional care you might need.

You can also call the government's dedicated hotline on 0800 0288 327.

You can register even if not classed as "extremely vulnerable".

NHS England have also published guidance which is available using the following link: www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/20200403-Clinician-FAQs-v_FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3iShbwOrmMGfUaje7sCpVauFQuT7WtgWY-mSTXQVDRbYCcpG4x29dq9CM

Locally, Marlow Rugby Club are coordinating assistance for elderly and vulnerable patients with things like shopping. They have a number of volunteers already identified that are available to support the elderly or vulnerable in the Marlow Community. Contact them via email at marketing@marlowrugby.co.uk and they can help to arrange for transport, provisions, or general assistance for those most in need. These services can also be accessed by calling Andrew on 07775 910910.

Vulnerable patients are also encouraged to search for the "Marlow C-19 Support" group on Facebook. This group has an abundance of volunteers covering over 190 streets in Marlow, who are offering assistance with things like shopping and collecting medication from pharmacies. Alternatively you can email marlowc.19fb@gmail.com. This group can also be contacted by calling Helen on 07788 602062.

The Lane End Community Support Group are also offering similar assistance to patients living in Lane End; and they are also coordinating their efforts with Marlow Rugby Club. Please also use the above email address to enquire about help in Lane End.

Lane End patients can also contact the High Wycombe Mutual Aid Group (wycombe-mutual-aid.org) are volunteers that are working in the local area to deliver medication, food shopping, or



1-to-1 phone conversations. More info can be found in this short YouTube video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2VvkDXaO5c&feature=youtu.be

Patients can self-refer for support by filling out an online form at the above website; emailing hwcoronavirusmutualaid@gmail.com; or calling 01494 911229. They also have a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/highwycombemutualaid/.

Other organisations are also happy to help in these demanding times, such as:

- Prevention Matters
 - o Tel: 01296 484322
 - o Email: preventionmatters@connectionsupport.org.uk
- Buckinghamshire County Council
 - o Email: communities@buckscc.gov.uk
- Carers Bucks
 - o Tel: 0300 777 2722

6) HELP FOR AT RISK PATIENTS

Am I high risk?

If you have a medical condition which means it is likely that infection with coronavirus would result in severe illness, then you will receive communication from the government and/or the NHS to advise you to shield yourself from all face-to-face social contact for 12 weeks and to remain at home at all times. You may be contacted by post, text message, or phone.

The NHS has contacted those patients who are at extremely high risk already but this initial contact has only been for those with specific conditions. The initial guidance has asked GP surgeries to contact other patients who they determined should also be placed into this category.

Some patients will not receive shielding guidance from the NHS or the government, but may still be at increased risk of infection from coronavirus. This includes the over 70s, diabetics, and asthmatics, among others. These will be patients that qualify for an annual flu vaccination within the NHS.

A number of patients remain concerned about whether they should be shielding, social distancing, or self-isolating and unclear about their level of risk. Along with risks relating to long term conditions, there are also risks for patients who are pregnant.

If you have a query as to whether you are in the Very High Risk group, please continue to stay at home and avoid contact with anyone outside of your household. We do not have the capacity to respond to patients individually on this matter at this time so you will not receive a response via the online service for queries relating to this topic.

All the information you need is here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults

You can also call the government's dedicated hotline on 0800 0288 327.

There is good information also to be found on the various disease specific websites:

- British Lung Foundation
 - o www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/coronavirus
- Asthma UK
 - o www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/
- British Society for Rheumatology
 - o www.rheumatology.org.uk/news-policy/details/covid19-coronavirus-update-members



- Pregnancy (Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists)
 - o www.rcoq.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/

7) GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Clearly those with underlying conditions are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 and employers should be following the guidance in the link below. Where possible enabling staff to work from home or if in the workplace ensuring that social distancing can be practiced. www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19

We are aware of the levels of anxiety our patients with long term conditions or pregnancy have and we encourage our patients to talk with their employers to try to agree a safe working plan during these difficult times.

We are also aware of the extreme pressure employers and businesses are under. As employers ourselves, we have sought to minimise or stop contact with the public for staff members with underlying conditions which put them at higher risk, redeploying them to back office roles where possible.

One of the issues GP surgeries have faced in further identification of patients at risk is the complexity of searching our clinical systems and the need for very specific parameters to have been developed in order to define the searches. It is unlikely for example that we will be able to define 'severe COPD' from a data perspective, similarly defining the data for moderate or severe asthma will be equally difficult without a single agreed approach at national level.

We are therefore concerned that the clarity being sought by patients and their employers may be some way off, or indeed may prove unachievable. We are sorry that expectations of the ability of GP surgeries to identify patients were raised and would like to assure you that we are working closely with other practices on this issue and that the problematic nature of this work has been raised at a national level.

We would therefore ask that employers and employees discuss a way forward which both parties can agree on utilising the guidance available (which is being updated all the time).



8) OTHER GUIDANCE

Why has my record been updated to include a frailty score?

During the COVID-19 pandemic all surgeries in the UK have been asked to undertake a project coding the frailty score of all patients over the age of 65 years. The frailty score is calculated using a combination of the Electronic Frailty Index and the Rockwood Score. More information can be found here:

- Electronic Frailty Index: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/older-people/frailty/efi/#what-does-the-new-frailty-identification-requirement-in-the-gp-contract-mean-for-general-practice>
- Rockwood Score: https://www.bqs.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/attachment/2018-07-05/rockwood_cfs.pdf

What can I do to help?

- **PLEASE STAY AT HOME.**
 - o **Social distancing is the most powerful tool we have at the moment to best manage the spread of the virus.**
- **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NOBODY ATTENDS THE SURGERY UNLESS THEY HAVE BEEN INVITED TO DO SO, OR HAVE A CONFIRMED FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENT BOOKED.**
- if you have a high temperature; or a new, continuous cough - do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy, or hospital.
- Read the NHS advice about staying at home including how long to isolate for: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/
- If you think you have coronavirus, you MUST self-isolate for 7 days and ALL members of your household MUST self-isolate for 14 days as they may be contagious before developing symptoms. See this explanatory diagram for more information on how long members of your households should be isolating for if necessary: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874011/Stay_at_home_guidance_diagram.pdf
- It is also vital that we keep our phone lines as clear as possible to allow those with an urgent medical need to speak with our clinicians.
- Check our Coronavirus Updates page on www.marlowdoctors.co.uk regularly for any updates to our current operating procedures.
- **Remember to wash your hands regularly with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds.**

When should I contact 111?

- You do not need to contact NHS 111 to let them know you are self-isolating.



- Use the online coronavirus service for advice at 111.nhs.uk if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home.
- Contact us if your symptoms are not improving after 7 days; or if they are worsening.
- **YOU SHOULD ONLY CALL US OR 111 IF YOU CANNOT GET HELP ONLINE.**

Where can I get help and find more information?

- If you are at risk or vulnerable and are worried about getting basic supplies, visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable
- For more information on social distancing, visit the following gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people
- For further information on high risk groups; how to avoid catching and spreading coronavirus; and pregnancy advice: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
- Visit our “Useful Links” page for links to other online resources

WE ASK ALL OUR PATIENTS AND CARERS TO BE PATIENT AND WORK WITH US DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME SO THAT WE CAN SAFELY DELIVER THE RIGHT CARE TO ALL THOSE WHO NEED IT.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING.





7) Coronavirus - Other Useful Links

- NHS England
 - o www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19
- Isolation Note
 - o 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note
- Explanatory Household Isolation Diagram
 - o assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874011/Stay_at_home_guidance_diagram.pdf
- Coronavirus and Mental Health
 - o www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse87c2b
- What is social distancing?
 - o www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults
- Guidance on Social Distancing
 - o www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
 - o www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus
- What is shielding?
 - o 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
- Hand Washing
 - o www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/
- Gov.uk
 - o www.gov.uk/coronavirus