



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

# Coming into Hospital: Coronavirus

A Guide for people  
with dementia, families  
and carers.

Making sure nobody faces dementia alone.

# Hospital care

We are all being asked at present to change the way we live our lives, so that those at most risk of coronavirus are kept as safe as possible.

This leaflet is designed to answer some of the questions you may have about what will happen if you need hospital treatment for coronavirus or any other health condition.

Our NHS is still open for everyone and you should still:

- Telephone 999 if you require emergency assistance
- Telephone your local hospital if you have a planned appointment to check if this has been cancelled and what you should do if you experience problems
- Contact your GP by telephone for non-urgent health problems.

For the most up-to-date Coronavirus information please go to:

[www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

[www.gov.scot/coronavirus](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus)

For further information and support please contact Alzheimer Scotland's 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline:



**24 HOUR**  
Dementia  
**Alzheimer Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

# Helpline

Freephone 0808 808 3000  
Email [helpline@alzscot.org](mailto:helpline@alzscot.org)

## 1

# Social distancing and isolation

New admission procedures, and social distancing and isolation measures are currently in place within hospitals to ensure that the risk of coronavirus passing from one person to another is minimised.

You are encouraged to discuss your dementia diagnosis with staff and share details of any difficulties this causes you. This will help staff to keep you and others safe whilst you are in hospital. This can include supporting you with:

- Regular reminders and/or assistance with hand washing to reduce the risk of infection
- Ongoing information about your care needs and involving you and your family in care planning
- Helping you to maintain a safe distance from others
- Activities to relieve boredom which can be undertaken without the need to be in close social contact with others
- Speaking with you about any concerns you may have related to being in hospital.

Helpful hint: It is extremely helpful for staff to have written information about the things that are important to you. If you have a completed “**Getting to Know Me**” document please bring this into hospital with you. If you don't have one you will be able to get one by visiting [www.alzscot.org/gettingtoknowme](http://www.alzscot.org/gettingtoknowme) or you can ask a member of hospital staff to provide you with this.

**getting to know me**

This information will help staff to ensure you are well looked after in hospital. It will help us get to know you, understand who and what is important to you and how you like things to be. We hope you, your family, friends and carers complete this information with as much detail as you wish to share with us. People who cannot complete this information with as much detail as you wish will be supported as well. If you need any help to complete this information, please ask a member of staff.

**my name:** my full name & the name I prefer to be called

**the person who knows me best:**

**some family & friends that are important to me:**  
your family, friends, pets or things which matter

**I would like you to know:**  
anything that will help the staff get to know you, things you like to do, things you don't like to do or need you

**my life so far:** this may include your previous or present employment, interests, hobbies, important dates & events

## 2

## Hospital visiting

Normal hospital visiting is unfortunately restricted at this time and there are limited circumstances where family members or close friends will be able to visit whilst you are in hospital.

The current advice is that visits to support someone with dementia are deemed essential, if your loved ones not being present would cause you to be distressed. However, in order to minimise some of the risks we ask you to keep the number of people who come to see you as low as possible, ideally one main person.

Staff appreciate that this will be unsettling for you and your loved ones and they will consider your needs on an individual basis. Whenever possible they will work with you to ensure that you can remain as connected as possible to those closest to you, via alternative means such as:

- Telephone calls
- FaceTime
- WhatsApp
- Skype.

Don't worry if you are not familiar with using online chat or video calling services as staff are normally able to help with this. Likewise if you need help reading cards or letters received from family and friends, staff can help with this.

Helpful hint: You are welcome to bring your personal mobile telephone, iPad or tablet into hospital. It is useful if you can also bring in a charger for each device and if you label all items with your name or initials.

# 3

## Things to bring into hospital with you

At this time, hospital admissions tend to be on an unplanned basis. It is therefore a good idea to prepare a list (or bag) containing the things you would need to bring with you at short notice. This might include your:

- Prescribed medications or a list of them
- Power of Attorney Certificate
- Anticipatory care plan
- Getting to Know Me document
- Hearing aids and spectacles. It's helpful to label these with your name or initials and what you use them for e.g. reading or distance
- Small familiar items that will help you to feel comfortable e.g. music and headphones or a small family photo
- Changes of clothing and nightwear
- A small clock and calendar to help you keep track of time.
- A notepad and pen to write down information.

Helpful hint: Family members may be able to drop items off/collect items at the main entrance of the hospital e.g picking up washing and delivering clean nightwear. It may still be a good idea to add to your list (bag) some of the other items family/friends normally bring in such as:

- Bottle of your favourite juice/drinks
- Packs of your favourite biscuits sweets or snacks.
- Magazines
- Puzzle books
- Favourite toiletries.

## 4

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Due to the current outbreak of coronavirus, hospitals have implemented new measures to help keep patients and themselves safe. This includes the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as:

- Face masks
- Disposable gloves
- Eye masks
- Disposable aprons or gowns.

When staff are wearing protective equipment, it can make it more difficult to know who people are and this can be confusing. It may also be difficult for you to hear what staff are saying. At times some patients may also be asked to wear a mask to protect themselves and others, for example when transferring from one ward to another.

Helpful hint: Staff are making efforts to reduce patient anxieties and enhance communication e.g. by wearing a lanyard with a photo of their face, writing their name on their apron and by using pictorial cards to help support your understanding of planned care interventions.



# 5

## Supporting you and your family

If you require to come into hospital, you will be cared for by a team of staff who will work very closely together to support the needs of you and your family. Members of the team may include:

- Nursing staff
- Medical staff
- Reception and admin staff
- Allied Health Professionals including Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Dietitians.

Helpful hint: There are also staff in hospital who have specialist training in dementia care e.g. Dementia Champions and Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Nurse Consultants, who can help to provide additional support and advice. Hospital staff will be able to help you and your family link with them.



# Alzheimer Scotland

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[www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org)

Thanks to the Alzheimer  
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**24 HOUR**

Dementia



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