Guidance on home isolation for a patient undergoing diagnostic testing for Wuhan novel coronavirus

Version 1.0, 28 Jan 2020

Background and scope

This internal guidance is for Health Protection Scotland (HPS), NHS Scotland Health Protection Teams (HPTs) and duty doctors who are awaiting results from diagnostic testing for Wuhan novel coronavirus (WN-CoV) when the patient does not require admission to hospital. For guidance on isolation of patients who require admission to hospital, healthcare workers should follow the WN-CoV infection prevention and control guidance [WN-CoV Infection prevention and control guidance](#).

Patient isolation in their own home should be decided on a case-by-case basis by the local HPT and the attending clinician, following a discussion about the suitability of self-isolation in the home. HPS can be consulted for further discussion if required. A checklist appended to this document is provided to support the HPT in their assessment (Appendix 1)

Assessment of Suitability for self-isolation in the home

- **Accommodation**: Ensure accommodation is suitable, including that it is not more than 60 minutes away by road from appropriate healthcare services and, if a multiple occupancy dwelling, that unexposed residents would not be at risk of exposure to the case being self-isolated at home.
- **Other occupants**: Consider whether any other occupants of the same dwelling are particularly vulnerable, including but not limited to chronic conditions, immunosuppression, pregnancy, infants and those over 65 years.
- **Contact numbers**: Ensure that there are at least two different contact phone numbers e.g. one for the patient and another household/responsible person (see Appendix 1) and that these numbers are working.
- **Ability to adhere to self-isolation**: Ensure that the patient is capable of adhering to the requirements of self-isolation. For children or individuals with additional needs, this may mean confirming that the parent or guardian is capable of following and happy to abide by the requirements and recommendations.

Availability of suitable transport between the hospital and home

The overall aim is to ensure others are not exposed to a potentially infectious patient, when the patient travels from the hospital to their home/accommodation. **The patient must not walk home or use public transport or a taxi.**

Decisions regarding transport home must be taken in consultation with the local HPT.

- **Options**
  - The patient may drive home in their own car if they feel/are considered well enough. Ensure the patient can reach their car safely without exposing others e.g. wearing a surgical facemask and avoiding communal areas.
  - The patient can be driven home by a person who has already had significant exposure to the patient (e.g. partner or household member) who is aware that the patient is under investigation for Wuhan novel Coronavirus and content to drive them home.
o If the above transport options are not feasible, then Scottish Ambulance Service should be contacted to request an ambulance to take the patient home, informing the ambulance controller that the patient is under investigation for WN-CoV and therefore infection prevention and control measures must be applied. If this is not possible, the hospital will need to admit the patient, adhering to the recommend infection prevention and control guidance for WN-CoV.

Please note this guidance will be subject to change as further epidemiological and clinical information becomes available. Therefore, please check SHPIR for the most up to date version

Instructions for patients under home isolation

Note to HPTs and healthcare professionals: Recommendations marked with an asterisk (*) may be difficult to apply if the patient awaiting test results is a young child or has additional needs which may impact on their capacity to adhere to the guidance. Professional judgement should be used to decide whether it is appropriate to make each of these recommendations, on a case-by-case basis.

Advise the patient, the spouse/parent/guardian/caregiver, as appropriate, of the requirements for self-isolation at home (see patient advice sheet below). Provide advice to all household members (see household member advice sheet below). Also provide the additional information on hygiene measures sheet.

The patient must be provided with contact details of a named medical contact before they leave the hospital.
Patient advice sheet – home isolation

Your local health protection team and your doctor have agreed that you may stay at home while you wait for the results of your tests for Wuhan novel coronavirus infection. This is because you do not need to be admitted to hospital and because you have agreed to follow the important instructions described below. If you are not the patient but have agreed to support the patient with home isolation, then you must also agree to support the patient in following these instructions:

1. **Stay at home**
   You should remain in your own home, except for getting medical care (see sections 3 and 8 before getting medical care). Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis until you have been told that is safe to do so. You will need to ask for help if you require groceries, other shopping or medications.

2. **Separate yourself from other people in your home***
   You should stay in a well-ventilated room e.g. with a window that can be opened to the outside and separate from other people in your home. Ensure that shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom) are well ventilated.
   You should also use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, if available. If you cannot have your own dedicated toilet and/or bathroom, regular cleaning will be required. See “Toilet and bathing” (section 6) below for further advice.

3. **Wear a surgical facemask if advised to***
   If you have been provided with surgical facemasks, then you should wear this when you are in the same room with other people. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

4. **Cover your coughs and sneezes**
   Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of tissues into a plastic waste bag (see section 8 for managing waste/rubbish), and immediately wash your hands with soap and water.

5. **Wash your hands frequently**
   Wash your hands and advise those in your household to wash hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

6. **Toileting and bathing**
   If possible you should use your own toilet and bathroom. If you do not have a shared toilet and/or bathroom, regular cleaning will be required (see below), ideally each time the toilet and/or bathroom is used.

7. **Household items.**
   All dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, should be cleaned in a dishwasher, if possible, or hot soapy water, after each use.

   Do not share clothing, towels, etc. Wash all laundry (clothing, linen, bedding and towels) at the highest temperature for the fabric using laundry detergent. This should be above 60°C. If possible tumble dry and iron using a hot setting/steam iron. Do not take laundry to a laundrette. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling dirty laundry.
8. **Household cleaning**
   Clean all surfaces, such as counters, table-tops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets and toilet handles, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day with a household cleaner that is active against viruses and bacteria. Follow the instructions on the product label and check they can be used on the surface being cleaned. Wash hands with soap and water after cleaning surfaces and handling clothing and bedding.

9. **Waste**
   All waste you generate, including used tissues, and surgical facemasks if used, should be put into a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed into a second bin bag and tied. Do not dispose of it or put it out for collection until you have been informed that you do not have Wuhan novel coronavirus. If you test positive, you will be instructed on waste disposal.

10. **Do not have visitors in your home**
    Only those who live in your home should be allowed to stay. Do not invite or allow visitors (such as friends and extended family) to enter. If you think there is an essential need for someone to visit, then discuss it with your named medical contact first.

11. **Medical appointments**
    Do not attend any medical appointments without first discussing with your named medical contact on the number provided to you.

12. **Monitor your symptoms**
    Seek prompt medical attention if your illness worsens, for example, if you have difficulty breathing; you should call your named medical contact using the phone number given to you. If it is an emergency, and you need to call an ambulance, inform the call handler/operator that you have been tested for Wuhan novel coronavirus and are awaiting results.
Household member advice sheet

1. **Wash your hands frequently**
   Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water, especially if you are caring for and/or handling items of the person who has been tested. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

2. **Limit contact with the patient as much as possible**

3. **Ensure that shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom) are well ventilated**
   Keep windows opened as much as possible

4. **Wear a surgical facemask if advised to***
   If you have been provided with surgical facemasks and advised to use them, then you should wear the mask when you are in the same room as the patient. Discard the mask into the household waste/rubbish bin after use and then wash your hands with soap and water.

5. **Do not invite visitors into the home**
   Only those who live in your home should be allowed to stay. Do not invite or allow visitors (such as friends and extended family) to enter. If you think there is an essential need for someone to visit, then discuss it with the patient’s named medical contact first.

6. **Ensure that individuals at increased risk of severe disease avoid contact with the patient**
   Anyone who is at increased risk of severe disease should not care for the patient or come into close contact with them. This includes but is not limited to household members who have a chronic condition/disease or who may have a weakened immune system due to treatment or medication, infants (<1 year), age >65 years and pregnant women. Short-term alternative housing may need to be considered for these individuals.

7. **Household items**
   All dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, should be cleaned in a dishwasher, if possible, or hot soapy water, after each use.

   Do not share clothing, towels, etc. Wash all laundry (clothing, linen, bedding and towels) at the highest temperature for the fabric using laundry detergent. This should be above 60°C. If possible tumble dry and iron using a hot setting/steam iron. Do not take laundry to a laundrette. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling dirty laundry.

8. **Toileting and bathing**
   If possible, the person undergoing testing for Wuhan novel coronavirus should have their own dedicated toilet and bathroom. If they cannot have their own toilet and/or bathroom, regular cleaning will be required (see below), ideally each time the toilet or bathroom is used.

9. **Household cleaning**
   Clean all surfaces, such as counters, table-tops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets and toilet handles, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day with a household cleaner that is active against viruses and bacteria. Follow the instructions on the product label and check they can be used on the surface being cleaned. Wash hands with soap and water after cleaning surfaces and handling the patients clothing and bedding.
10. Waste

All waste that has been in contact with the patient, including used tissues, and surgical facemasks if used, should be put into a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. Do not dispose of it or put it out for collection until you know that patient does not have Wuhan novel coronavirus. If the patient tests positive, you will be instructed on waste disposal.
Appendix 1- Checklist to assess whether residential accommodation is suitable for home isolation for individuals undergoing diagnostic testing for WN-CoV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient is considered by clinician to be well enough not to require admission to hospital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two phone numbers (patient and other household member(s) or responsible person) – check that these are working</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to secondary care – no more than 60 minutes’ travel time by road</td>
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<tr>
<td>If multi-occupancy accommodation, can exposure of other residents be minimised sufficiently?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Household member(s) /responsible person to support patient must themselves not be at increased risk of severe disease (this includes immunosuppression, pregnancy, infants (&lt;1 year), people over 65 years or those with chronic medical conditions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient and/or responsible person have capacity to understand instructions and advice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate patient transport to the residence has been identified: Private vehicle driven by patient (if considered well enough) OR Private vehicle driven by a person who has already been exposed and who is aware of the possible diagnosis and happy to transport the patient home OR Suitable ambulance transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual room to sleep in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities for hand hygiene – soap and running water, designated towel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sufficient toileting facilities that the patient can have their own toilet OR it will be feasible that shared facilities can be adequately cleaned between use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sufficient tissues, kitchen towel, waste disposal bags*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sufficient cleaning materials*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Area in which waste can be temporarily stored securely</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written advice provided</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contact details for named medical contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advice for the patient about self-isolation requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advice for other members of the household</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* enough supplies for 48 hours