

ADVICE TO PATIENTS WITH NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS IN VIEW OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Neurology Outpatient Clinics

For the foreseeable future, all outpatient clinics with the Visiting Consultant Neurologists Drs Bracewell and Pietkiewicz have been cancelled as they are not able to travel to the Island and are being redeployed to other urgent clinical duties in Liverpool. The Walton Centre has cancelled all Neurology Clinics at all its satellite Hospitals throughout the North West of England and North Wales, as well as the Isle of Man. At the Walton Centre itself, there is a very limited outpatient service for neurological emergencies only.

Where possible, we will do our best to either offer advice by letter, or conduct a consultation on the telephone. If necessary, we will endeavour to arrange face-to-face appointments with a health professional based on the Island.

The clinics of Heidi Morris, Neurology Nurse Specialist, have also been cancelled for the foreseeable future and patients will be contacted by the Patient Information Centre (PIC) and offered a telephone consultation instead.

Please bear in mind that the number of patients with COVID 19 is growing at an ever-increasing rate, and that this will place an increasingly great burden on the NHS on the Island and in the UK over at least the next few weeks, and possibly months. We may well find that we will not be in a position to continue to offer advice and telephone consultations for neurological problems that are not very urgent or very serious.

Blood Clinic

The Blood Clinic remains open; it is important that all patients continue to attend for any blood monitoring required for their treatment.

General advice

[Full guidance](#) for people with neurological conditions, their doctors and carers is available online.

Patients with conditions that do not affect their swallowing or breathing muscles and in whom the immune system is working normally, are not considered to be at increased risk from COVID-19.

Milder or moderate forms of many of the commoner neurological disorders, such as Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis and Epilepsy are not currently considered to confer increased risk, so long as the breathing and swallowing muscles are functioning well.

Advice for those with Multiple Sclerosis during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Neurology Team is working hard to continue to maintain our service and minimise the risk to our patients from the COVID-19 virus and the effects of MS. We will not be able to speak individually to all patients throughout this challenging period but we appreciate the anxiety that the current COVID-19 pandemic has generated for patients with MS, their families and carers. We hope that highlighting the most important sources of advice and information is of assistance at this time.

The situation with the COVID-19 epidemic is changing fast and for those who want to keep up to date with current government advice and how it affects those with MS we recommend visiting the MS Trust's website which includes the latest news and developments (<https://www.mstrust.org.uk/>) or their Facebook page.

Those on a disease modifying treatment should not stop taking their medication without discussing this with their MS Team. If you are taking an MS drug and wish to [look at how this might affect you](#) then you can find the advice online.

Infusions of Natalizumab (Tysabri) continue at Nobles and patients should attend for these unless they are displaying symptoms of infection eg high temperature.

As MS Specialists, we are aware that MS does not directly affect the immune system and some, but not all patients with MS are more vulnerable to the virus. Patients who have recently received certain MS drugs and patients who have higher levels of disability are at more risk and we advise that MS patients who have any of the following risk factors should follow advice and self-isolate themselves:

- Patients with higher levels of disability who require a wheelchair to mobilise outside of the house
- Patients who have received Ocrelizumab (Ocrevus) within the past 6/12
- Patients who have received Cladribine (Mavenclad) within the past 2 years
- Patients who have received Alemtuzumab (Lemtrada) within the past 4 years
- Patients who have received high dose steroids (Methylprednisolone) within the past 2 weeks

For Information about other specific conditions the following websites may be useful:

Motor Neurone Disease: <https://www.mndassociation.org/mnd-and-coronavirus/>

Myasthenia Gravis: <https://www.myaware.org/news/coronavirus-information-1>

Epilepsy: <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/daily-life/safety/coronavirus-covid-19>

Muscular Dystrophy: <https://www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/news/news/detailed-guidance-on-risks-from-coronavirus/>

Huntington's Disease: <https://www.hda.org.uk/getting-help/covid-19-information-advice>

Specific guidance for stroke and Parkinson's patients will be issued separately and advice can be sought from the relevant local teams if required.