



I am concerned about potential symptoms of prostate problems – what should I do?

About [COVID-19](#)

The correct name for the virus is SARS-coronavirus-2 and the disease it causes is Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). SARS means Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Throughout the document this new (novel) disease will be referred to as [COVID-19](#).

This document is intended to provide general information and is not intended to replace medical advice. **Prostate Scotland cannot give individual advice or recommend which treatments might be suitable for an individual or recommend individual medical care or health professionals.** As the following is general information, guidance and procedures for each health board may be slightly different. If you have been given specific advice by your health care professional, then you should always follow their advice.

We have compiled this information on [COVID-19](#) and men who have [symptoms](#) that they are worried about to the best of our knowledge and understanding at the present time. As the situation is constantly changing, almost on a daily basis, and as more knowledge and information become available, this information and guidance may change. We will try to keep you as up to date as possible.

Who can I contact

Your best point of contact for information will be your [GP Practice](#). As you will understand, NHS staff are under a great deal of pressure at the moment and you may not get through to speak to the [GP Practice](#) or Practice Nurse straight away. You may be asked to leave your name and telephone number so a member of staff can call you back or they may advise on an email address that you can reach the GP or Practice Nurse on.

If your GP, Practice Nurse or someone from the NHS is trying to get in touch with you, this may show on your phone as 'number withheld'. It may be best to answer 'number withheld' calls in this current situation, especially if you have left your name and number for a call back. They will let you know straight away who is calling.

You may receive a text from NHSNoReply. These are usually texts to give you information and don't allow you to get back in touch.

What is the policy about treatment currently?

NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government have stated that the NHS will continue to provide vital cancer treatments, and emergency and urgent care for all patients. If it becomes necessary, it will **prioritise** some patients for treatment based on need.

Shielding – what is it, why is it essential and the recent changes to this guidance

Please note. You can see the latest Scottish Government guidance on '[shielding](#)'. You can also download the 2 page PDF route map on shielding.

On the 23rd July 2020, the Scottish Government announced that [shielding](#) is to be paused from **1.8.20**. You should receive a letter or SMS text message confirming the latest changes announced and that shielding is to be paused.

Some additional changes have now been announced to the original guidance on [shielding](#)

As from **24.7.20** a number of changes were announced to the guidance on [shielding](#).

This includes being able to meet with up to **8** people from **2** other households each day **indoors**, being able to meet **outdoors** with up to **15** people from **4** other households, travel in a car with someone you don't live with, use public transport, go to pubs and restaurants staying in the outdoor areas, go to shops and indoor markets, go to the barbers or hairdresser and visit indoor attractions and if you live alone you can form an extended household with one other household. You should wear a face covering if you can't physically distance and face coverings are compulsory on public transport and in shops.

Continue to wash your hands with soap and water regularly especially when you get home if you've been out and about,

You can see more details in our 'Info Guidance' page on shielding [here](#).

You can also watch a video about shielding [here](#).

Further guidance about going out and about has been produced by the government:

1. A guide to help you understand what activities are safer than others can be found [here](#)
2. A tool to help you protect yourself during daily activities can be found [here](#)

A [workplace risk assessment tool](#) to help people consider their individual risk when returning to work is also available.

If you have not already registered with the SMS text service, then it may be worth considering doing so. A COVID-19 forecasting service for shielding is being

developed and people who have been [shielding](#) will be informed through the SMS text service about the risk of being exposed to COVID-19 in their local area.

In the future, the Government is looking at other ways that shielding might change. As the situation changes and as more knowledge and information become available, guidance on shielding will change. We will try to keep you as up to date as possible with these changes.

For those people who are at very high risk of severe illness additional protection measures are advised which involves minimising all interaction between them and others (called shielding).

Those who are extremely vulnerable should:

- not leave their homes (please see guidance above as this has been updated)
- minimise all non-essential contact with other members of their household

For more information on shielding go to <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding>

People who fall into this category will be contacted by the NHS by letter or email. Some people may find that they receive more than one letter if they have multiple 'shielding' conditions. 'Shielding' applies to men who are being treated by chemotherapy for their [prostate cancer](#).

If you discover that you are not on the 'very vulnerable list' and don't receive a letter, but think you should be, you should contact your GP, or you can register via the NHS111 website to receive a letter. Having this letter might be helpful in terms of getting priority for home deliveries etc.

Thank you to our NHS

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank **all** NHS staff throughout Scotland who are doing a wonderful job in extremely challenging, difficult and unprecedented circumstances who have been working tirelessly to support all patients.

Although the weekly Thursday night 'Clap for our Carers' has come to an end, join the nation on **Thursday 25th March 2021 at 8pm** to celebrate our carers in the '[Clap for our Carers Day](#)' – a date to put in your diary now.

If you are concerned about symptoms

It's been found that many people who have health concerns are not getting in touch with their [GP practice](#), hospital or even attending A & E departments. This could be for a variety of very well intentioned reasons, such as not wanting to put additional pressure on their [GP practice](#) or the health service, when the health service has so many other pressing matters at this busy time.

It is however the case that the health service is indeed still very much open to help and treat people with urgent worries and needs. And the Scottish Government and the NHS are assuring people that the NHS is indeed available and 'open for business' - especially so in vital areas such as [cancer diagnosis](#) and [treatment](#).

In fact, the Scottish Government recently launched 'The NHS is Open' campaign, that urges people to contact their [GP practice](#) or local hospital if they have urgent health worries. If you have an urgent health concern out of hours then you should still call 111, or if it is an emergency dial 999.

Emergency admissions, [cancer](#) treatment and other urgent care will continue as planned.

If you have concerns about the [symptoms](#) you have when peeing, or see blood in your urine or see blood in semen then you should get in touch with your [GP practice](#) and ask for further guidance.

You can find out more about [symptoms](#) of prostate cancer or prostate disease [here](#).

There is also a [symptom checker](#) on our website that you can do. Although this will **not** give a [diagnosis](#), it will point to the next steps that you need to take. As most appointments with your GP will be done (even initially) by phone or video call, then you can print this off or take a screen shot and send to your GP.

It's been stated that all [GP practices](#) in the country are now equipped to use '**Near Me**'. This system works just like a face-to-face appointment except that people don't need to travel to the [GP practice](#). People can receive urgent health care and advice remotely from the safety of their own home. You will need to have a device for making a video call, such as a smartphone, tablet or computer with webcam, and a reliable internet connection.

If it is felt necessary, there are still face-to-face appointments being arranged for those who need them.

If your GP has asked you to come back for a repeat [PSA blood test](#) or if you require a routine [PSA blood test](#) as a follow-up after treatment, then you should get in touch with your [GP practice](#) to find out how to go about this.

You might find that for follow up [PSA blood tests](#) you may not be asked to attend quite as often as you did before. The [GP practice](#) will most likely have some safeguarding measures in place. You should bear in mind that a test result(s) **may** take longer to come back but in certain areas test results are back in the same time as normal.

If you have a medical emergency and need an ambulance, you should continue to call 999 or 112.

This information

The information contained in this leaflet has been developed by Prostate Scotland and reviewed by members of our advisory group, [PAGES](#).

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