



BRITISH CONGENITAL CARDIAC ASSOCIATION

Updated BCCA COVID-19 guidance for extremely vulnerable groups with congenital heart disease (27 March 2020)

On 21 March 2020 (and updated 24 March) the UK Government issued further guidance on social distancing, covering 'extremely vulnerable' people. This guidance can be found at:

<https://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>

Extremely vulnerable groups for shielding

Among people with congenital heart disease, **only** the following groups are considered to be extremely vulnerable and therefore needing to follow Government guidance on shielding:

- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease

Pregnant women with significant heart disease

The British Cardiovascular Society and UK Maternal Cardiology Society have developed specific guidance on which pregnant mothers are thought to fall into the extremely vulnerable group. This guidance can be found at:

<https://mailchi.mp/bcs/bcs-newswire-799593?e=04c51bac7e>

Other patients with congenital heart disease

The guidance issued by BCCA on 18 March 2020 remains the best advice for other patients with congenital heart disease, their families and carers, based on the evidence available at this time. This guidance can be found at:

https://www.bcca-uk.org/pages/news_box.asp?NewsID=19495710

Following the Government's social distancing advice rigorously will afford the best protection for other congenital heart patients. A small number of individual patients with congenital heart disease may be advised by their cardiologist to follow the guidelines covering 'extremely vulnerable' people because of their unique health condition.

Congenital heart disease services

Patients, families and carers should be reassured that congenital heart units across the country are working in a co-ordinated manner to maintain urgent services.

As you would expect at this time, non-urgent work is being stepped down. Routine outpatient appointments will be delayed, and others may switch to telephone or videoconference. Face to face appointments will only be offered where this is critical for clinical reasons. Only essential tests will be arranged.

All units are working to support their usual arrangements for providing advice to patients, but please be aware that clinical staff, including specialist nurses, may be redeployed to the provision of direct patient care, and this will affect their ability to respond in the usual way.

If you may have coronavirus and are getting worse

The guidance advises that if your illness or the illness in any household members is worsening you should seek prompt medical attention. If it's not an emergency, contact NHS 111 online at <https://111.nhs.uk/>. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. If it is an emergency and you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the call handler or operator that you or your relative have coronavirus symptoms.

Please also alert your cardiac unit so that they are aware of the situation and can advise you.

Please do NOT come direct to hospital or go to a GP surgery.

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