

Due to coronavirus, fewer people are contacting their doctor. Your local surgery is ready to help you safely. They can talk to you over the phone, or by video link, and can arrange for further tests. Whatever happens, tell your doctor if your symptoms get worse or don't get better. Early diagnosis saves lives.

Spotting the signs of cancer

You must call your GP if you have:

- Unexplained blood that doesn't come from an obvious injury
- An unexplained lump
- Unexplained weight loss, which feels significant to you
- Any type of unexplained pain that doesn't go away



Four in ten people are too concerned about being a burden on the NHS to seek help from their GP.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that you continue to use our services if you have concerns about your health.

While some consultations may now be completed in a different manner, it is imperative that you continue to get the healthcare you deserve. So please, help us help you, by continuing to follow the national guidance and to contact your GP or medical team if:

- you are a cancer patient who is worried about a developing problem
- you are someone who is concerned they have the signs and symptoms of cancer. These include: Bleeding (that doesn't come from an obvious injury), lumps, weight loss, any continued or prolonged pain.
- you have any other serious concerns about your health

England's top cancer doctor has urged people not to hesitate to get checked as new research revealed that nearly half of the public have concerns about seeking help during the coronavirus pandemic.

One in 10 people would not contact their GP even if they had a lump or a new mole which did not go away after a week, the survey found.

Another third of people would worry about seeking help, according to polling carried out by Portland.

Getting coronavirus or giving it to their family were among the top reasons that people would not come forward when they have cancer symptoms along with fears that they could be a burden to the health service.

Professor Peter Johnson, the NHS clinical director for cancer, stressed that NHS staff had worked hard to make sure people can get cancer checks and treatment safely so there is no need to delay.

Waiting to get help could have serious consequences for patients and put a greater burden on the NHS, Prof Johnson said.

Online consultations mean people do not necessarily need to go to GP surgeries for check-ups.

Professor Peter Johnson, NHS national clinical director for cancer, said:

“NHS staff have made huge efforts to deal with coronavirus but they are also working hard to ensure that patients can safely access essential services such as cancer checks and urgent surgery. From online consultations to the roll-out of cancer treatment hubs we are doing all we can to make sure patients receive the life-saving care that they need. The wishes of patients and their families will always come first, and we have to make sure that people feel safe coming to hospitals, but my message is clear: people should seek help as they always would. We know that finding cancer early gives us the best chance to cure it, and ignoring potential problems can have serious consequences now or in the future.”

Prof Johnson’s call follows sharp drop in cancer referrals as patients are not contacting their GP for health advice.

Cancers are detected earlier and lives are saved if more people referred for investigation for checks.

Michelle Mitchell, Cancer Research UK’s chief executive, said:

“It’s understandable that people might be worried about leaving their home during the pandemic or think the NHS is too busy, but you should still contact your doctor if you’re worried about signs and symptoms or notice a change that isn’t normal for you. If you’re reluctant to visit your GP in person, you can contact them for a virtual appointment. In most cases it won’t be cancer, but let your doctor decide as then your case will be tracked and if you do receive a cancer diagnosis, then you will receive treatment as soon as it’s safe to go ahead. The earlier a cancer is diagnosed, the more likely it is treatment will be successful and the higher the chance of survival. So even in these stressful times it’s vital people don’t delay seeking help with cancer symptoms.”

A useful short video by Cancer Research can be viewed here: [Coronavirus and Cancer – Symptoms of cancer and advice during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

**Cancer Patients:
Shielding, self-isolation and staying alert**

Shielding. You should practice shielding if you are 'extremely vulnerable' – at higher risk of becoming seriously ill with coronavirus. If you are in this group, check the guidance in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#), depending on where you live.

Self-isolating. If you have coronavirus symptoms or live with someone who does, you should self-isolate. Self-isolating means staying at home and avoiding face-to-face contact for 7 or 14 days. Check the guidance in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#), depending on where you live.

Staying alert. If you are not shielding or self-isolating, you can out outside as long as you follow guidance and stay 2 metres away from people you don't live with. Check the guidance in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#), depending on where you live.