

COVID-19 GUIDANCE OCTOBER 2021



Introduction

National guidelines and legislation have relaxed significantly since August 2021, however in all healthcare settings, standard infection prevention and control measures stand, and our duty of care requires a responsibility to public health and safety beyond that required in other business settings. Save Face have reviewed our previous guidelines with reference to government guidelines for close contact services and those for healthcare settings and provide the following information/guidance.

Risk Assessment

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

Your risk assessment will help you decide if you have done everything you need to. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has interactive tools to support you:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>

You do not have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment if you:

- have fewer than 5 workers
- are self-employed

However, you may still find it useful to do so.

You must review the measures you have put in place to make sure they're still working or if there are changes in the workplace that could lead to new risks.

How COVID-19 is spread

The main way of spreading COVID-19 is through close contact with an infected person. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person.

Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with COVID-19, when people who are infected cough or sneeze near them or if they touch them.

Managing risk and completing your risk assessment

To carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, you should consider the different ways the virus can spread and put in place measures to reduce the risk of each of these different ways.

You should use the guidance to consider the risk within your business and decide the appropriate measures to adopt.

This guidance suggests ways to reduce the risk of each of the different ways the virus can spread. You may also identify other measures to reduce risk when carrying out your risk assessment. Some of the measures may help reduce the risk of more than one of the different ways the virus can spread.

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through aerosols, consider:

Providing adequate ventilation:

- through doors, windows and vents
- by mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts
- through a combination of both

This is because fresh air helps to dilute the virus in occupied spaces. If you have mechanical ventilation, you should maximise the fresh air your system draws in and avoid systems that only recirculate air and do not draw in a supply of fresh air.

Identifying any poorly ventilated spaces and taking steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas.

A CO2 monitor could help you assess whether a space is poorly ventilated. If you can't improve ventilation in poorly ventilated spaces, minimise use of these spaces.

Read the advice on air conditioning and ventilation on the [HSE website](#).

Identify any areas of congestion in your clinic and consider if any reasonable steps could be taken to avoid this.

- Operate an appointment only system
- Discourage patients from arriving early
- Establish a system to direct patients through the clinic avoiding passing in narrow spaces
- Discourage staff from congregating in the staff room, if social distancing cannot be maintained.

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets:

Physical distancing of 2 metres remains in place as standard practice in all health and care settings, unless providing clinical or personal care and wearing appropriate PPE.

Schedule appointments to ensure the number of patients in the clinic reception at any one time would not compromise social distancing rules.

In larger clinics risk assessment may identify ways more than one patient can attend at any time, without passing each other. However, numbers of staff and patients in and out of the building in any one day may increase risk.

Where possible, patients should be taken straight to the treatment room, maintaining a 2-metre distance from any staff until the procedure commences.

When seating is necessary, move furniture to ensure a distance of 2 metres or more between you and patients except during treatments.

Staff must also observe the 2-metre social distancing rule at all times

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Payments should be taken contactless, if possible, to avoid the use of a card machine. Patients must be advised in advance.

When card payments are necessary, use an appropriate disinfectant on the machine between use.

Patients and visitors/contractors should be encouraged to wear face coverings until it is necessary to remove.

Staff performing close contact procedures should wear disposable PPE including face mask (Type II or type IIR) gloves and apron.

Patients (and staff) with seasonal allergies who are prone to sneezing or coughing should take antihistamines and if symptoms are not managed, wear masks which may limit the treatment options. (This risk should be identified at pre appointment screening). It is important to minimise the dispersal of respiratory secretions, reduce both direct transmission risk and environmental contamination.

If either a member of staff or a patient does need to cough or sneeze, then the 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' process must be applied.

Disposable tissues must be available, used covering nose and mouth, then disposed of promptly in a lined, pedal operated bin and hands washed immediately.

Putting in place measures to reduce contact between people, particularly between patients, visitors and staff. Where practical, measures could include:

– reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)

Screens can be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other, such as at the reception desk.

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through contaminated surfaces, consider:

Invite patients and visitors to use hand sanitiser on arrival and departure. This is particularly important before and after touching shared objects or surfaces that other people touch regularly.

- Maintain regular cleaning of surfaces, particularly surfaces that people touch regularly.
- Reduce clutter and non-essential materials which cannot be decontaminated.
- Ensure decontamination of treatment areas and equipment between patients.
- Where possible, use contactless payments.

Managing your patients

Objective: To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19

Patient screening

Prior to attending an appointment

Focus on risk of patients who are positive attending. Screen before they attend and advise patients to contact to discuss if they are at all unwell.

- Have you now received both of your vaccines?
- Have you tested positive within the last 10 days?
- Do you live in a household where someone has symptoms?
- Have you been told to self-isolate by test and trace?

Do you have any of the following symptoms?

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell
- Are you currently feeling well?

If the patient has any of these symptoms, however mild, they should stay at home and reschedule their appointment. You should also make sure that staff and patients who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the clinic.

You're no longer legally required to collect customer contact details but doing so will support NHS Test and Trace to contact those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 so that they can book a test. You can enable people to check in to your venue by displaying an [NHS QR code poster](#). You do not have to ask people to check in or turn people away if they refuse. If you choose to display a QR code, you should also have a system in place to record contact details for people who want to check in but do not have the app.

By law, businesses must not allow a self-isolating worker to come to work. It may not be necessary for adults who have received both vaccinations to self-isolate following close contact with an individual who has tested positive. Please refer to the following guidance:

- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)
- [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#)

Provide clear information to patients on your protocols and requirements. You could provide this information on your website and social media, also in standard communication with patients at all contact points. You could also display posters and signage in the clinic reception area to reinforce guidance and policy.