

# Self care communications toolkit – using NHS inform during COVID-19

Self care communications toolkit – using NHS inform during COVID-19 .....	1
Purpose of this toolkit .....	2
Introducing and reminding people about <a href="http://www.nhsinform.scot">www.nhsinform.scot</a> .....	3
Post 1 – intro 1 .....	3
Post 2 – intro 2 .....	3
Self help .....	3
Post 1 - self help guides .....	3
Post 2 - self help A-Z .....	4
Post 3 – NHS inform .....	4
Post 4 - NHS inform .....	4
Common reasons for using <a href="http://NHSinform.scot">NHSinform.scot</a> .....	4
Post 1 - Stomach ache or abdominal pain .....	4
Post 2 - Nose bleeds .....	5
Post 3 - Gastroenteritis .....	5
Post 4 - Leg cramps .....	5
Screening programmes are paused – stay symptom aware .....	6
Post 1 - Introduction .....	6
Post 2 - Be symptom aware .....	6
Post 3 - Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening .....	7
Post 4 - Bowel cancer .....	7
Post 5 - Breast Cancer .....	7
Post 6 - Cervical Cancer .....	8
Post 7 - Diabetic retinopathy .....	8
Dental health .....	9
Post 1 – self care .....	9
Post 2 - urgent dental need .....	9
Post 3 – not registered with a dentist .....	9
Post 4 – urgent dental need outside working hours .....	9
Accessibility and other languages .....	10
Post 1 – NHS inform other languages .....	10
Post 2 – NHS inform BSL .....	10
Post 3 – NHS 24 phone line services for other languages or communication needs .....	10
Facebook graphics .....	11

## Purpose of this toolkit

At NHS 24, we know that our Primary Care colleagues are in the frontline to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This toolkit is intended to help you support people with concerns other than COVID19 – common symptoms, minor ailments, dental health and concerns due to screening programmes being temporarily paused.

We're including a number of posts that can be used in your own practice website or Facebook feed. There are links throughout to clinically approved advice from our team at NHS 24 – the same team who take care of your patients when they call us out of hours.

**Please do not change the text of any of these posts. They have been written and approved for clinical safety and must be used as provided.** [ 'Link to ' addresses are provided in full for your information, they need not be included in posts so long as the links in the text work.]

By signposting to these services we anticipate that more people will be able to care for themselves at home, reducing pressure on both General Practice and our telephone lines at NHS 24.

**For continually updated information for Scotland on health aspects of coronavirus [go here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19).** <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

Links to support with **mental health** and wellbeing are included at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus-mental-wellbeing>)

NHS 24 and NHS inform are here for everyone. We have information available in **alternative formats** on our website. All alternative formats can be accessed from a single page: [www.nhsinform.scot/translations](http://www.nhsinform.scot/translations). This has links to commonly used languages, BSL, easy read and audio. There is information on some of the most frequently requested conditions as well as COVID-19

Feedback on this toolkit is welcome. Please email [EngagementTeam@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:EngagementTeam@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk)

## Introducing and reminding people about [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

### Post 1 – intro 1

Our NHS is here for us all during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; however, our GPs and hospitals are exceptionally busy. Some services such as dentists are closed and pharmacies have restricted opening times. Many of us will prefer to avoid travelling for healthcare if we can avoid it. It is hard to know where to turn. In Scotland you can turn to [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) day and night for information on health conditions, what you should do, and when you should get in touch with our professionals.

[Link to > [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot)]

### Post 2 – intro 2

NHS inform is your digital health information service for Scotland. Our website is here day and night with clinically approved advice from our team at NHS 24. If you have questions, or symptoms that are worrying you, go to [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) to find simple ways to care for yourself and your family at home. You can also see when you should be seeking medical advice for something more serious.

[Link to > [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot)]

## Self help

### Post 1 - self help guides

If you need to care for yourself or someone else and you are not sure what to do, [start with self help guides](#) from NHS inform. They are an A-Z of the main physical and mental health conditions that people seek support for. They have been written with and approved by our clinical team at NHS 24 – the same team that look after people who call us out of hours.

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/self-help-guides>]

## **Post 2 - self help A-Z**

From Allergies to Warts and Verrucas, we have clinically approved advice available on [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) where you don't even need to lift the phone. [Find out how you can care for yourself](#), or if you need to get in touch with your GP or 111

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/symptoms-and-self-help>]

## **Post 3 – NHS inform**

NHSinform is your digital health information service for Scotland. [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) is here for you day and night through these worrying times. We can help you take care of yourself, and if you need a doctor, we can help you decide when to call.

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot>]

## **Post 4 - NHS inform**

We know that thousands of people living in Scotland get the health information they need from [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) every day. Our clinical team at NHS 24 – the same team that look after you when you call us at night and weekends, approves this information. Our website has advice for all the most common reasons that people look for advice and support.

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot>]

## **Common reasons for using NHSinform.scot**

### **Post 1 - Stomach ache or abdominal pain**

Lots of people seek advice from [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) for stomach ache.

Cramps or a dull ache in the tummy are usually short-lived and often not serious. If sudden, severe pain starts, it could be a medical emergency, especially if it is concentrated in one area.

Phone your GP as soon as possible or 111 if your GP is closed.

[More about what to do for stomach aches and abdominal pain, and when to call for help.](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/stomach-liver-and-gastrointestinal-tract/stomach-ache-and-abdominal-pain>]

## **Post 2 - Nose bleeds**

Nosebleeds can be frightening, but they aren't usually a sign of anything serious. Lots of people seek advice from [www.NHSinform.scot](http://www.NHSinform.scot) for nosebleeds. They can often be treated at home.

Most nosebleeds can be stopped without the need for medical attention. But rarely further treatment is needed. [Learn how to stop a simple nosebleed and who needs to see a doctor](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/ears-nose-and-throat/nosebleed>]

## **Post 3 - Gastroenteritis**

Gastroenteritis is a very common condition that causes diarrhoea and vomiting. It is usually caused by a viral tummy bug.

It affects people of all ages, but is particularly common in young children.

Gastroenteritis can be very unpleasant, but it usually clears up by itself within a week. You can normally look after yourself or your child at home until you are feeling better.

Phone your GP if you're concerned about worsening symptoms or need any advice, or call 111 when your GP is closed.

[Find out what you can do to treat gastroenteritis at home, and when you should get help](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/stomach-liver-and-gastrointestinal-tract/gastroenteritis>]

## **Post 4 - Leg cramps**

Leg cramps are a common and usually harmless condition where the muscles in your leg suddenly become tight and painful.

It usually occurs in the calf muscles, although it can affect any part of your leg, including your feet and thighs.

After the cramping has passed, you may have pain and tenderness in your leg for several hours.

Three out of four cases occur at night during sleep.

[Read more about leg cramps, how to help yourself and how they can be treated.](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints/conditions/leg-cramps>]

## Screening programmes are paused – stay symptom aware.

### Post 1 - Introduction

The Scottish Government has decided to pause the following screening programmes temporarily:

- Breast Screening (mammograms)
- Cervical Screening (smear tests)
- Bowel Screening (home test kits)
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening (ultrasound of abdomen)
- Diabetic Retinopathy (Eye) Screening (images taken of the eye)

This is due to the rapidly changing situation with coronavirus (COVID-19), its impact on clinical services and the need for social distancing. No more tests will be carried out until further notice. [Find out more](#)

[Link to > <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/screening/coronavirus-covid-19-changes-to-screening-tests-and-appointments>]

### Post 2 - Be symptom aware

Screening programmes are paused during the coronavirus pandemic. It is more important than ever to be aware of any new unexplained symptoms during this time.

Be aware of any symptoms or signs of the conditions we normally screen for. Our [screening condition pages](#) have these details.

If you are concerned about these symptoms, contact your GP practice without delay.

For more information, please visit our screening condition pages or call NHS Inform on 0800 22 44 88.

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/healthy-living/screening/>]

### **Post 3 - Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening**

While the AAA screening programme in Scotland is paused due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it's [very important to be symptom aware](#).

If you have unusual or unexplained abdominal (tummy) or lower back pain, contact your GP practice immediately.

[Link to > <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/heart-and-blood-vessels/conditions/abdominal-aortic-aneurysm#about-abdominal-aortic-aneurysms>]

### **Post 4 - Bowel cancer**

While the bowel-screening programme in Scotland is temporarily paused due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it is very important to be symptom aware.

If you notice anything unusual such as blood in your poo, a change in bowel habits or abdominal (tummy) pain, contact your GP practice without delay. [Learn about the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer](#).

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/cancer/cancer-types-in-adults/bowel-cancer#signs-and-symptoms-of-bowel-cancer>]

### **Post 5 - Breast Cancer**

Breast Cancer - If you notice any changes to your breasts, like a lump or swelling in your breasts or armpits, leaks or changes in your nipple, contact your GP practice.

Find out more about the [signs and symptoms of breast cancer](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/cancer/cancer-types-in-adults/breast-cancer-female#symptoms-of-breast-cancer> ]

## **Post 6 - Cervical Cancer**

While the cervical screening programme in Scotland is paused due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it's important to be symptom aware.

If you have unusual vaginal discharge, or bleeding after sex, between periods or after the menopause, contact your GP practice immediately. These are usually caused by something other than cancer but it's important to have them checked.

### [Signs and symptoms of cervical cancer](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/cancer/cancer-types-in-adults/cervical-cancer#symptoms-of-cervical-cancer>]

## **Post 7 - Diabetic retinopathy**

While the diabetic retinopathy (eye) screening programme in Scotland is temporarily paused due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it's important to be symptom aware.

If you have diabetes and notice any changes to your sight, contact your GP practice, diabetes specialist or optician without delay.

### [Signs and symptoms of diabetic retinopathy](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/diabetes/diabetic-retinopathy#about-diabetic-retinopathy>]

## Dental health

### Post 1 – self care

Routine dental care services in dental practices in Scotland have now been suspended. It's more important than ever to take good care of your oral health. For tips on caring for your own and your family's dental health see NHS inform, your digital health information service for Scotland. Our website is here day and night with clinically approved advice from the same team who take care of you if you call at night and weekends.

[Link to > <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/dental-health>]

### Post 2 - urgent dental need

If you are registered with a dental practice and you feel you have an URGENT dental need, in normal working hours you should telephone your practice on their usual number. PLEASE DO NOT GO TO YOUR DENTIST

If your dentist confirms that you have an urgent dental need, and if you are have no symptoms of COVID-19, your details will be forwarded to an urgent dental care centre who will contact you.

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 you will be contacted by staff from a designated COVID-19 urgent dental care centre.

[Action required > telephone usual practice]

### Post 3 – not registered with a dentist

Routine dental care services in dental practices in Scotland have now been suspended. If you are NOT registered with a dentist, please contact your local Public Dental Service for dental advice. You can get details from your local Health Board.

[Action required > contact local health board dental service]

### Post 4 – urgent dental need outside working hours

If you feel you have an URGENT dental need outside normal working hours, whether you are registered with a dentist or not, please contact NHS24 on 111

You can find further advice regarding COVID-19 and what to do if you have symptoms on the [NHS inform website](#)

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot>]

## Accessibility and other languages

### Post 1 – NHS inform other languages

People living in Scotland whose first or preferred language is not English can get health information from [www.NHSinform.scot/translations](https://www.NHSinform.scot/translations). This information is approved by our clinical team at NHS 24 – the same team that look after you when you call us at night and weekends.

[Link to > <https://www.NHSinform.scot/translations>]

### Post 2 – NHS inform BSL

Health information for people who live in Scotland and use British Sign Language (BSL) can be found at [www.NHSinform.scot/BSL](https://www.NHSinform.scot/BSL) and on NHS inform's You Tube channel

[Link to > [www.NHSinform.scot/BSL](https://www.NHSinform.scot/BSL)]

### Post 3 – NHS 24 phone line services for other languages or communication needs

NHS 24 phone-based services can be accessed by using Language Line, contactSCOTLAND-BSL, and the UK Relay service.

contactSCOTLAND-BSL allows D/deaf and Deafblind British Sign Language (BSL) users to make calls to our services through an online BSL interpreter

[contactscotland-bsl.org](https://contactscotland-bsl.org)

Language Line allows you to use the NHS 24 111 service, and all our helplines, if English isn't your first language [www.nhs24.scot/get-in-touch/language-line](https://www.nhs24.scot/get-in-touch/language-line)

Relay UK - helps people with hearing and speech difficulties communicate with anyone over the phone, using the national relay service [www.relayuk.bt.com/](https://www.relayuk.bt.com/)

## Facebook graphics

These images can be used alongside posts.

They have been sized for use on Facebook.





# Common health questions

