

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This page was last updated on 10 January 2022.

Here at ECHO we know that many families are worried about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it may potentially affect you and your children

The current situation is rapidly evolving, and we are taking care not to provide conflicting or confusing information. We are currently following the advice set out on the [NHS website](#) and the [UK Government](#) as it is updated with the latest information and recommendations. We are in regular contact with Evelina London and other charities - as soon as we have any updated information we will share it on this page.

Updated BCCA Statement on COVID vaccination in 5-17 year-olds (10 January 2022)

The BCCA have published updated guidance for patients about the COVID 19 vaccination in children and young people aged 5-17 with a summary of JCVI advice:

[Read the full statement here.](#)

Updated BCCA Statement on COVID vaccination (13 December 2021)

The BCCA have published updated guidance for patients about the COVID 19 vaccination in children and young people with a summary of JCVI advice:

[Read the full statement here.](#)

BCCA Updated Statement: COVID vaccination for children and young people (19 October 2021)

The BCCA have published updated guidance for patients about the COVID 19 vaccination in children and young people with Congenital Heart Disease. [Read the full statement here.](#)

BCCA Advice: Myocarditis and Pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination in children and young people (14 September 2021)

The BCCA have published guidance for patients on Myocarditis and Pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination in children and young people. [Read the full guidance here.](#)

BCCA advice: COVID-19 vaccination in 12-15 year olds with CHD (14 September 2021)

The BCCA have published advice for patients about the COVID 19 vaccination in 12-15 year olds with Congenital Heart Disease. [Read the full advice here.](#)

BCCA & JCVI advice: children's vaccinations (20 July 2021)

The British Cardiac Congenital Association have given some clarity around children's vaccines, in response to newly published guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). [Read the ECHO update here.](#)

BCCA guidance: immunisation and CHD (18 January 2021)

The BCCA has published updated guidance for COVID-19 immunisation, in the context of congenital heart disease. [Read the full guidance here.](#)

Evelina London Children's Hospital still open for all appointments and admissions

Evelina London is keen for all patient families to understand that you are still allowed to attend appointments and procedures during lockdown. If your child has been invited for a face-to-face appointment or procedure it is really important that you still attend. Please note, only one parent or carer can attend the appointment with your child. You can find [more information from Evelina London here](#).

BCCA updated guidance in light of national lockdown for England (11 November 2020)

The BCCA has published updated guidance in light of national lockdown for England. This information was published on 11 November 2020 and can be found [on the BCCA website here](#).

BCCA updated guidance: Returning to work and education (2 September 2020)

The BCCA (British Congenital Cardiac Association) has published updated guidance for patients and parents about returning to work and education. This information was published on 2nd September 2020 and can be found [on the BCCA website here](#).

Shielding guidance for children and young people (Updated 10 November 2020)

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has [published guidance on shielding for children and young people](#). This information was updated on 10 June 2020 and is available on the [RCPCH website here](#).

Useful facilities currently open near Evelina London Children's Hospital

If you are staying at or near Evelina London below is an up-to-date list of hotels, supermarkets and food delivery services currently operating near the hospital.

Guidance on when to take your child to hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic (Apr 2020)

The NHS have published a guide to when to take your child to hospital during the pandemic. This was published on 2 April 2020. [Click here to view the resource.](#)

Update from Dr Bell - Head of Cardiology Evelina London Children's Hospital (27 March 2020)

BCCA COVID-19 guidance for vulnerable groups with congenital heart disease (18 March 2020)

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

ECHO's Approach to Coronavirus (18/03/20)

Letter from Evelina London (16/03/20)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases.

The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19)?

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

What can I do to keep myself safe?

How to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus:

- wash your hands with soap and water often - do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Watch this video to learn how to properly wash your hands:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQCP7waTRWU>

WHAT IS THE SITUATION FOR PEOPLE WITH

CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE, IS MY CHILD AT INCREASED RISK?

Patients with congenital heart disease should continue to follow government advice with regards to COVID-19.

Detailed updated information has been published for each of the nations of the UK. This includes advice for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those who were shielding during the first lockdown) which includes some adults and children with congenital heart disease.

[According to the BCCA \(11 Nov 2020\)](#), there appears to be a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from COVID-19 and some children previously placed in the extremely vulnerable group may now be classed as less vulnerable and this should be discussed with you cardiac team

Read refer to the latest government advice on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable:

<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>

Should my heart child avoid attending/school/college/university?

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Is it safe for me to attend my hospital?

For all cases of Coronavirus (Covid-19), those being treated in hospital is in isolation so these patients do not cause a threat to others.

Check your hospital's current guidance about attending appointments as it is highly likely they will suggest attending necessary appointments and avoiding unnecessary attendance.

Current Evelina London advice:

Changes to Government COVID-19 restrictions do not affect medical appointments or procedures. If your child has been invited for a face-to-face appointment or procedure, it's important you still come. Find out about the extra steps we are taking to [keep you safe](#).

You can find updates from the Evelina London here:

<https://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/about-us/news-events/2020-news/information-on-novel-coronavirus.aspx>

What to do if you think you might have coronavirus

If you think you might have coronavirus or you've been in close contact with someone who has it:

- stay at home and avoid close contact with other people
- do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
- use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do next

The [111 coronavirus service](#) will tell you if you need to continue to stay at home (self-isolate) or if you need medical help.

If a family member is concerned that they might have COVID-19, advise them that it is best to following the advice above, and avoid contact with others. The NHS website has a list of [frequently asked questions about coronavirus](#) that may be useful in these situations.

NHS advice states:

- if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

- for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period. (See [ending isolation](#) section below for more information)
- if you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period
- if you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible

What information is there about shielding?

Hailing the resilience of those who have been shielding, the Health and Social Care Secretary confirmed from Monday 6 July they will be able to spend time outdoors in a group of up to 6 people including those outside of their household, while maintaining social distancing.

Those who are shielding and live alone or are single parents with children will also be able to create a 'support bubble' with one other household of any size, following the same rules already in place for the wider population.

From Saturday 1 August, the guidance will then be relaxed so clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield, but support will remain available from NHS volunteers and local councils. People will retain their priority for supermarket delivery slots, and still be able to access help with shopping, medication, phone calls and transport to medical appointments.

While this group of clinically extremely vulnerable people should continue to follow strict social distancing measures, they will be able to participate in more activities such as visiting shops and places of worship.

From 1 August, those who need to work and cannot do so from home will be able to return to work as long as their workplace is COVID secure, adhering to the guidance available.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-ease-guidance-for-over-2-million-shielding?dm_i=4VE6,CRO1,3PFR62,1FRY0,1

what advice is there about staying at home?

Government advice gives information about who should stay at home, how to prepare and guidance for you and your family during your time staying at home.

Read the government advice here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

What about my child's medicines, should I stockpile?

We recommend that you have back up medicine, such as some extra packets easily available.

However we don't advise that you start stockpiling your child's medicine.

What information is there for Carers?

Carers UK have collated helpful information about being a carer during the Coronavirus pandemic which is available on their [website](#).

What is ECHO's history of providing support, information and signposting to the heart community?

Established 36 years ago, ECHO is parent led with heart parents on our board of trustees, and we have a strong relationship with the Evelina Guys & St Thomas NHS trust, NHS England, other organisations including other children's and adults heart charities throughout the heart community.

What is the impact of coronavirus on ECHO's work?

ECHO's work continues, based on the latest guidance from the NHS and government. While the way we carry out our services may change, how and why we support families will remain the same.

Please follow @echoukcharity and [subscribe to our e-news](#) for the latest updates from ECHO.

Can I join the ECHO closed Facebook community to stay up to date?

Parents/carers can join by [registering as an ECHO member](#) and then requesting to [join the Facebook group](#). We will encourage people to respect the privacy of the ECHO community and avoid sharing updates or links that could cause concern or upset from unverified sites.

How can I help ECHO and the heart community at this time?

You can still [donate](#) - families need charities like ECHO to ensure they get support and information, especially during this time when they most need us.

Due to the pandemic, ECHO has seen a huge loss of income so your help really goes a long way to ensuring that we can be there for families in times of need.

with so much information available from different places where do I get the correct information?

Here are reliable links which we suggest you take the time to review:

- [NHS](#)
- [WHO](#)
- [BCCA](#)

Your wellbeing and Coronavirus (Covid-19)

The news about the Coronavirus (Covid-19) may be causing you and your family to feel stressed.

During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective.

Public health agencies and experts in all countries are working on the outbreak to ensure the availability of the best care to those affected.

If your child is a cardiac patient at the Evelina London Children's Hospital, support is available from the Clinical Psychology team. However, we ask that you are patient as they are running a limited service during this time. [Watch this message from Niki Gregg](#), Clinical Psychologist at the Evelina London's Paediatric Cardiology team.

See the below resources from the World Health Organisation for more information on managing stress during this time.

Updates from ECHO

We'll be updating this web page and using our social media channels and closed Facebook group for ECHO members to share any updates as soon as we have them and keep our community updated.

[Facebook @echoukcharity](#) | [Twitter @echoukcharity](#) | [Instagram @echoukcharity](#)

Please note ECHO are not medical professionals therefore if you require specific advice please call NHS 111.