

Covid-19 Risk Management Policy on Face-to-Face Screening Examinations

Executive Summary

Medicals Direct Group propose to progressively return to face to face consultations in line with Government advice and adopting a risk managed approach to mitigate, as far as is possible, transmission of infection and avoiding risk to persons most vulnerable to the Covid-19 virus infection.

This policy is based on available scientific evidence and guidance from Government Policy.. The Government have indicated 3 steps to normality and have announced that from June 15th non-essential shops can re-open with appropriate social distancing measures. This would seem to be a suitable point to restart a risk managed return to face to face screening medicals.

Preamble

The Covid-19 epidemic has led to unprecedented social change directed by government to reduce spread of the disease. The instruction of stay at home policy for all non-key workers led to cancellation of all MDG clinics and face to face consultations from 23rd March 2020.

On 9th May 2020 the Prime Minister announced a roadmap of progressive relaxation of the lockdown in England and it is pertinent for the business to consider policy around re-introduction of face to face consultations. The exact date will be determined by a combination of factors including Government guidance, Customer agreement, Medical practitioner/Nurse practitioner agreement and agreement of clients.

Covid-19 - The Risk

It is known and accepted that the virus is not equally dangerous to all people. Certain groups are much more susceptible to serious complications including premature death than others. However the risk to the vast majority of younger healthy people is low.

For these clients it ranges from scarcely noticeable symptoms to comparable to a nasty bout of influenza requiring time off work. However there are people with certain medical conditions who are at risk of severe illness and potential premature death and government strategy is to limit spread of the disease to reduce the risk of exposure to this group.

Government policy is that social distancing along with hygiene measures is the most effective way to reduce spread of the virus. Face to face medical consultations therefore present challenges in reducing this risk. The risk can never be eliminated completely but an evidence based risk management strategy can mitigate that risk considerably and comply with government policy.

Transmissibility

It is known that the virus transmits principally from surface contact and less so by aerosol droplet spread. Therefore, hygiene measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can significantly reduce transmission risk.

Covid-19 Infection Risk

The government stratify those at risk into high, medium and low categories:

High Risk

- *have had an organ transplant*
- *are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy*
- *are having an intense course of radiotherapy (radical radiotherapy) for lung cancer*
- *are having targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system (such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors)*
- *have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma)*
- *have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine*
- *have been told by a doctor they you have a severe lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma or severe COPD)*
- *have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID or sickle cell)*
- *are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids)*
- *have a serious heart condition and are pregnant*

High risk people are currently advised to shield and we would advise against medical screening (the likelihood of such patients requiring screening would be extremely low). We would also advise against clients who have a high risk individual in their household undergoing medical screening.

Moderate Risk

- *are 70 or older*
- *are pregnant*
- *have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)*
- *have heart disease (such as heart failure)*
- *have diabetes*
- *have chronic kidney disease*
- *have liver disease (such as hepatitis)*
- *have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)*
- *have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections*
- *are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)*
- *are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)*

Government recommendations for people in the moderate risk category are:

- *staying at home as much as possible*
- *only leaving home for specific reasons such as:*
 - *for work, if you cannot work from home*
 - *going to shops to get things like food and medicine, or to collect things you've ordered*
 - *to exercise or spend time outdoors*
 - *for any medical reason, to donate blood avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, provide care or help a vulnerable person*
- *staying 2 metres apart at all times from anyone you don't live with*

MDG policy is to offer medical screening of clients in this group but to ensure they have to full facts regarding risk. We would not pressurise clients who did not wish to go ahead having considered the risk.

Low Risk

- *The remaining clients (the vast majority) will fall in to this group*

MDG policy is to offer medical screening to clients in this group but ensure they have access to the full facts regarding risk. We would not pressurise clients who did not wish to go ahead having considered the risk.

Medicals Direct Nurse Assessments

The MDG business conducts nurse consultations which take place in the client's home or workplace. The same principals will apply in that the nurse must be comfortable in undertaking the examinations and be free of risk factors. Government recommended PPE in this setting can be found here - <https://bit.ly/3crPKJZ>

Medicals Direct Doctors Assessments

Doctor consultations take place in consulting rooms. The doctor will have confirmed that appropriate hygiene and social distancing measures are in place and appropriate government recommended PPE is utilised.

Informed Consent

For both home and consultation venue examinations the client must have signed an informed consent form to confirm that they do not fall into the high risk category, or share a household with someone who is in the high risk category, have not been diagnosed or had symptoms of Covid 19 in the last 7 days and have not been advised to self-isolate due to contact with a sufferer in the last 2 weeks, and that they understand that prevention of transmission of the virus can never be 100% guaranteed.

Post Consultation Infection

Clients will be asked to immediately contact MDG if they develop symptoms or test positive Covid 19 within 14 days of the examination. If any medical practitioner subsequently develops symptoms or tests positive with Covid-19 within 14 days of a consultation they will inform MDG. Appropriate investigation and advice will then be disseminated as guided by the Medical Director of MDG.