

This graphic, intended for use in a primary care setting, is based on data available in March 2020, much of which is from hospital settings in China. It will be revised as more relevant data emerges.



## 1 Set up

Prepare yourself and decide how to connect

Have current 'stay at home' covid-19 guidance on hand

UK government advice:  
<http://bit.ly/ukgovisol>

Video is useful for

Severe illness  
Anxious patients  
Comorbidities  
Hard of hearing

Scan medical record for risk factors such as:

Diabetes Pregnancy Smoking  
Chronic kidney or liver disease COPD  
Steroids or other immunosuppressants  
Cardiovascular disease Asthma

## 2 Connect

Make video link if possible, otherwise call on the phone

Check video and audio

Can you hear/see me?

Confirm the patient's identity

Name  
Date of birth

Check where patient is

Where are you right now?

Note patient's phone number in case connection fails

If possible, ensure the patient has privacy

## 3 Get started

Quickly assess whether sick or less sick

Rapid assessment

If they sound or look very sick, such as too breathless to talk, go direct to key clinical questions

Establish what the patient wants out of the consultation, such as:

Clinical assessment Referral Certificate  
Reassurance Advice on self isolation

## 4 History

Adapt questions to patient's own medical history

Contacts

Close contact with known covid-19 case  
Immediate family member unwell  
Occupational risk group



History of current illness  
Date of first symptoms

Most common presentation

Cough Fatigue Fever Short of breath

Cough is usually dry but sputum is not uncommon

Up to 50% of patients do not have fever at presentation

## 5 Examination

Assess physical and mental function as best as you can

Over phone, ask carer or patient to describe:

State of breathing  
Colour of face and lips

Over video, look for:

General demeanour  
Skin colour

Check respiratory function - inability to talk in full sentences is common in severe illness

How is your breathing?

Is it worse today than yesterday?

What does your breathlessness prevent you doing?

Patient may be able to take their own measurements if they have instruments at home

Temperature Pulse  
Peak flow Blood pressure  
Oxygen saturation

Interpret self monitoring results with caution and in the context of your wider assessment

## 6 Decision and action

Advise and arrange follow-up, taking account of local pathways and capacity

Which pneumonia patients to send to hospital?

Clinical concern, such as:

- Temperature > 38°C
- Respiratory rate > 20\*
- Heart rate > 100† with new confusion

Likely covid-19 but well, with mild symptoms

Self management: fluids, paracetamol

Reduce spread of virus - follow current government 'stay at home' advice

Likely covid-19, unwell, deteriorating

Arrange follow-up. See by video or in person if you suspect pneumonia

Safety netting

If living alone, someone to check on them

Relevant comorbidities

Proactive, whole patient care

Maintain fluid intake - 6 to 8 glasses per day

Unwell and needs admission

Ambulance protocol (999)

Seek immediate medical help for red flag symptoms

## Red flags

Covid-19:

- Severe shortness of breath at rest
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Cold, clammy, or pale and mottled skin
- New confusion
- Becoming difficult to rouse
- Blue lips or face
- Little or no urine output
- Coughing up blood

Other conditions, such as:

- Neck stiffness
- Non-blanching rash

\* Breaths per minute

† Beats per minute

