



27th February 2020

Advice to patients who contact the surgery seeking advice about forthcoming travel plans in relation to the Covid-19 infection (Coronavirus)

Current guidance given to GPs by the Government, the NHS and Public Health England relates only to patients returning from territories where Covid-19 infection has been already been identified. There is no guidance given to patients who have holidays booked or travel plans that incorporate travel to these areas or elsewhere.

It remains the case that as Covid-19 is a respiratory borne virus, infection usually occurs through close contact with a person with Covid-19 via cough and sneezes or hand contact. A person can also be infected by touching contaminated surfaces if they do not wash their hands.

If you are in the group of patients who are eligible to receive the seasonal influenza vaccination on the NHS then you are considered to be at higher risk of complication arising from influenza. However, there is currently no guidance as to whether this influenza-specific higher risk patient is at greater risk from complications should they contract an infection caused by Covid-19.

Whilst it is understandable for patients to feel they ought to avoid travelling to areas currently identified as having cases of infection caused by Covid-19, at this time the doctors at Southbourne Surgery **cannot** give formal medical advice to avoid planned overseas travel (for work or holiday) to these areas or elsewhere. Any decision relating to a cancellation of travel arrangements already made needs to be taken by the individual concerned. Our doctors will not be able to sign holiday insurance forms to state this cancellation was made on specific medical advice.

As you will appreciate, the situation is constantly under review and any changes will be notified on our website.