

Medical Guidance

These notes are intended to provide a framework for a return to diving following easing of government restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is based on current knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with the outbreak and the current scientific evidence informing decisions by government and other relevant authorities. It is acknowledged that the evidence base and knowledge surrounding the outbreak is rapidly and continually evolving and so the guidance will be reviewed regularly and be subject to update and amendment as appropriate.

STATUS

Currently in the UK different criteria applies within each of the devolved administrations. Please refer to the STATUS document.

Protecting others and reducing the demands on the NHS

Current advice on avoiding transmission of the virus can be found on the Government Website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

The advice for anyone in any setting is to follow these main guidelines:

- The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or high temperature. If you have these symptoms, however mild, or test positive for Covid-19 you should follow the current government advice for your location
- If your symptoms worsen during any isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
- Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.
- To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue in a bin immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel.
- Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Anyone displaying any symptoms should NOT engage in any activity outside the home.

Medical Advice

In the UK BSAC and other UK based organisations are advised on medical matters by the UK Diving Medical Committee (UKDMC). Currently the UKDMC is actively formulating their advice on COVID-19 and the requirements for returning to safe diving activity. It should be noted that currently the medical evidence regarding the virus and its effects is incomplete and the subject of substantial research worldwide.

Medical fitness to Dive

When we get back into diving we will want to do so safely. One critical consideration is that if you have been confirmed to have had COVID-19 you should seek advice from a UKDMC medical referee to ensure you are safe to resume diving. UKDMC advice takes into account the severity of

any symptoms, the treatment you have received and the level of recovery.

The UKDMC medical form already has the following question:

6 A requirement for Medical Referee assessment in the guidance on return to diving after COVID-19 at ukdmc.org?

Anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 and/or suffered symptoms should refer to the [UKDMC scorecard](#) to determine how long to wait after returning to full fitness and whether they need to consult with a UKDMC Referee before returning.

The potential long term effects of COVID-19

At this, relatively early, stage the evidence is far from clear or well established and is continuing to develop.

Novel Corona Virus (SARS-CoV-2) infection (COVID-19) can manifest itself with various clinical syndromes, ranging from no symptoms, over a flu-like syndrome, to severe pulmonary compromise (ARDS – Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome) and cardiac symptoms (cardiomyopathy). Factors that determine the severity of COVID-19 symptoms are but incompletely known: older persons, suffering from other medical conditions, are an obvious group at risk; however, there are numerous cases reported of young, previously healthy persons in whom the disease has had a sudden and dramatic evolution.

It has been suggested that, where the symptoms were mild and improve within a week to complete resolution, the risk for permanent damage to heart or lungs is very low. However, we currently have no data about the long term complications as SARS-CoV-2 is a new disease. It will take time before the potential impact on individual health, and any lasting effects on lung or heart function, are captured in the peer-reviewed literature.

To be used in conjunction with other guidance including:

- Medical guidance
- Status
- Equipment guidance
- Shore diving
- CPR and rescue procedures
- Diver Training
- Travel Guidance
- Charter boat diving
- RIB diving
- Swimming pool usage
- Etc.