



West Suffolk
NHS Foundation Trust

ENT department
West Suffolk Hospital
Hardwick Lane
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 2QZ

Telephone: 01284 713820
Email: wsh-tr.ENTsecs@nhs.net
www.wsh.nhs.uk

Date: 2 June 2020

How to assess ear, nose and throat (ENT) patients safely during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear colleagues,

Some of our GP colleagues have been in touch with us asking how to safely assess ENT patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. To support you with this, we would like to share some guidance we received from [ENT UK here](#) which has a lot of detail about how to assess different conditions in ENT. Appendix 2 on page 31 is likely to be the most helpful section for you in community practice.

To broadly summarise:

- If patients can be treated **clinically without examination** (e.g. tonsillitis, persistent acute otitis media) it is still [acceptable to treat empirically with antibiotics](#)
- **Examination of the ear, microsuction or syringing** is not considered aerosol producing unless the tympanic membrane is perforated, so a water resistant mask for both the patient and the doctor should be enough protection
- **Examination of the nose and oral cavity** is not an aerosol producing procedure in itself, HOWEVER as the patient can cough or sneeze, FFP3 should be worn while conducting examinations
- The safe **management of epistaxis** [is summarised here](#)
- We are contacting patients mostly by phone where appropriate, but **are doing face-to-face consultations** when needed, and are also able to provide you and your patients with advice and guidance.

I hope you find this helpful, but if you have any queries, please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Marcos Martinez Del Pero, ENT consultant

On behalf of the WSFT ENT department