

PRESS RELEASE

New resource to support COVID-19 patients recover smell and taste loss

<https://abscent.org/nosewell>

People living with the debilitating effects of smell loss because of COVID19 now have a free online programme to help their recovery, thanks to collaboration between the British Rhinological Society (BRS), ENT UK and UK charity AbScent. 50 per cent of people with COVID19 lose their sense of smell, and with over 325,000 confirmed cases in the UK, at least 150,000 people have been affected, many of whom have persistent symptoms.

GPs and Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) clinics have been inundated by patients worried that their sense of smell and taste has been permanently damaged by COVID19. While research to understand more about the condition continues, ENT consultants agree on the simple and safe actions people can take to help themselves. NoseWell - the new elearning resource launched today - offers all the information and guidance a patient needs in one easy-to-use website.

Funded by the BRS with the support of ENT UK, the resource brings together evidence-based strategies for successfully managing smell recovery. Professor Claire Hopkins, President of the BRS, was closely involved in the development.

“Losing sense of smell and taste has a huge impact on patients, which is often compounded by difficulties in accessing advice and support, particularly while COVID19 continues to restrict access to healthcare. The BRS are delighted to be able to collaborate with AbScent to provide a much needed resource that will help all those affected.”

GPs are urged to use NoseWell to support patients with smell loss rather than referring to ENT services. ENT Consultant and AbScent Trustee Mr Simon Gane said: “We know the despair that living with a smell disorder can cause. Good management of the condition, and time, is what we recommend to patients in the first instance. NoseWell offers real practical solutions that I can recommend to patients with confidence.”

Chris Kelly, founder of charity AbScent, has led the project, ensuring everything known to be helpful is included in ways that everyone can use. “I am delighted to have worked with such respected members of the ENT community to create this resource, with the patient always first in mind,” she said. “I know from experiences shared in our Facebook group how devastating this is for thousands of people. To be able to give them something that offers hope for recovery is vital.”

Chrissi’s own experience of recovering her sense of smell following a virus in 2012 led to her setting up the charity that has been so influential in giving a voice to patients.

AbScent continues to work with researchers and clinicians around the world to understand more about smell disorders and the impact of COVID19 in particular.

For interviews and enquiries please contact:

Chrissi Kelly, AbScent UK

chris@abscent.org

Notes to editors:

COVID19 related smell loss

Anosmia affects over 50% patients with COVID19 (with up to 80 per cent in mild cases but lower rates in more severe cases that are hospitalised). It is transient in 50 per cent, with recovery within a few weeks, but recovery is delayed in the remainder, with 10 per cent cases showing persistent complete loss of smell at 8 -12 weeks. In addition, significant numbers of patients are reporting very disabling parosmia - a foul, acrid smell which causes anorexia and severe impact on quality of life. There is little awareness in primary care and limited support available for patients.

About NoseWell

NoseWell is an online training course that gives a patient the support and information they need to manage their recovery from anosmia.

Who is this for

GPs and clinicians: A verified resource to signpost patients to manage anosmia.

Patients: Anyone who has lost their sense of smell and taste as a result of COVID19.

When is it available

Available now. Free and open access at <https://abscent.org/nosewell>

What is it

Everything a patient needs to know about COVID19 smell and taste loss, with a series of short video guides to managing your recovery. Links to range of evidence-based solutions recommended by the British Rhinological Society and ENT UK.

NoseWell is not intended to replace medical advice from a GP or consultant, but can be used as a resource for clinicians to signpost patients too.

Features:

- Support: Moderated Facebook Groups and AbScent Forum.

- Expert Advice: Helpful videos from health care professionals.
- Smell Training: Everything you need to know.
- Tips for living without smell.
- Living with parosmia and phantosmia.

Visit at the AbScent website <https://abscent.org/nosewell>

About AbScent

AbScent is a UK registered charity No. 1183468 started in 2018 to help people experiencing the distressing effects of smell loss.

As well as a source of trusted information, facilitating peer support and providing practical solutions to aid recovery, AbScent also champions research to understand more about this debilitating sensory loss.

About ENT UK

About the British Rhinological Society