Monday 23 March

Dear colleagues,

**ENT needs PPE**

I write to you to explain and reassure you that we are keeping up our resolve to work safely and ensure that our patients, and we as frontline clinicians, are protected in doing the critical work that we are involved in during these unprecedented times. Following the rapid increase in the number of frontline ENT clinical staff in the UK who have become infected with COVID-19, and with reference to the experience of ENT colleagues from China and Italy, ENT UK are recommending the following:

We believe that it is imperative that PPE (Personal Protective Equipment: FFP3 masks, visors, gowns and gloves) is available and used for all forms of nasal and throat examination, in both the hospital, outpatient clinic and community settings. We should now assume that all our ENT patients are potential carriers of the virus. Please note that this is an important difference from our statement on Friday 20 March, and we must therefore only see patients for any ENT face-to-face consultation with appropriate PPE.

This includes those patients who require an endoscopic examination of their nose and throat which exposes both the operator and assistant to aero-digestive tract droplets. We have developed specific [guidance on naso-endoscopy](https://example.com) and for AGP (Aerosol Generating Procedures) in ENT. The [tracheostomy guidance](https://example.com) is being updated and intensive care units around the country are soon going to need to make critical decisions.

We have heard of instances around the UK where PPE is either not available or is in short supply. This will put key specialists at unnecessary risk. Now, more than ever, we need a well workforce and must support our national approach of containment to slow the spread of this potentially lethal virus and to ‘flatten the curve’. I will request that our service leads work with managers, and if the supplies of PPE are restricted, to limit all work which is not urgent.

When triaging urgent work such as referrals for cancer it will be useful to work on a system to prioritise. Professor Vin Paleri and colleagues have developed a simple triage tool, which you can access via the [accompanying document](https://example.com) outlining how the tool should be used. We advise that you read this carefully before using this resource.

Finally, we are working to ascertain your views on the availability of PPE around the country and we would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this [very important survey](https://example.com). Thanks to Gerry O’Donoghue and colleagues for developing this.

These documents and others will be published on the dedicated [COVID-19 resource webpage](https://example.com) of the ENT UK website. Keep an eye on the site, as we will continue to add useful documents and similar
resources in the coming days and weeks. Please be aware that the website is receiving a huge amount of traffic, which is currently making it slower than usual. However, we are working on a solution to this, and hope to have these issues resolved soon. In the meantime, it is still accessible, though may require a little patience.

Please take time to look after yourselves and your health and please let us know if there is anything further we can do to support you at this difficult time. We are working through Public Health England to give advice on AGP in addition to specialty-specific guidance that we have on the [ENT UK website](mailto:). 

Kind regards,

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