

# Guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together where someone is at increased risk or has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Updated 28 May 2020

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## Symptoms

The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above you should self-isolate at home.

## Who this guidance is for

This guidance is intended for:

- households with grandparents, parents and children living together where a member of the household is aged 70 or over, meaning they are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Clinically vulnerable people include anyone aged 70 or over, as well as those under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)
  - chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
  - [chronic kidney disease](#)
  - chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), or cerebral palsy
  - [diabetes](#)
- problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as a result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant women

There is a further category of people with serious underlying health conditions who are clinically extremely vulnerable, meaning they are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. They, their family and carers should follow the [guidance on shielding](#).

## Will my household be tested if we think we have coronavirus symptoms?

No, testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home and remain well enough to stay at home.

## Why staying at home is very important

It is very important that individuals with [symptoms](#) that may be due to coronavirus and their household members stay at home. Staying at home will help control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community, and particularly the most vulnerable.

Those with [symptoms](#) should remain at home for at least 7 days after the onset of their symptoms as set out in the [stay-at-home guidance](#). This will reduce the risk of you infecting others.

If one of you has symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus, then household members must also stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days as set out in the [stay-at-home guidance](#) and the [ending household isolation](#) section below. You should not go out even to buy food or other essentials unless you have no other means to secure them, and any exercise should be taken within your home. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in your house became ill.

If you are having food or other essentials delivered to your house, the person who is delivering the items should not come into your home. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

Staying at home may be difficult and frustrating, but there are things that you can do to help make it easier. These include:

- plan ahead and think about what you will need in order to be able to stay at home for the full 7 or 14 days
- talk to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need to make your stay at home a success
- think about and plan how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications that you will need during this period
- ask friends or family to drop off anything you need or order supplies online, but make sure these are left outside your home for you to collect
- make sure that you keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media
- think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have successfully completed a period of staying at home have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films
- many people find it helpful to plan out the full 14 days, such as on a make-shift calendar. You may also find it helpful to plan in advance what you will do if, for example, someone in the household were to feel much worse, such as have difficulties breathing
- when you are feeling better, remember that physical exercise can be good for your wellbeing. Look for online classes or courses that can help you take light exercise in your home

## If you have a person aged 70 or over living with you

You should take the following actions:

Minimise as much as possible the time they spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.

Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from the person(s) aged 70 or over and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If they can, they should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure they use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

If you do share a toilet and bathroom with a person aged 70 or over, it is important that you clean the facilities every time you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with the older person using the facilities first.

If you share a kitchen with a person aged 70 or over, avoid using it while they are present. If they can, they should take their meals back to their room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If the person aged 70 or over is using their own crockery and cutlery, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.

We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should:

- wash their hands more frequently, for 20 seconds, with soap and water; and avoid touching their face
- regularly clean frequently touched surfaces

## Advice for the children in the household

This guidance applies to children of all ages.

Keep following the [Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus](#) to the best of your ability, however, we are aware that not all these measures will be possible.

What we have seen so far is that children with coronavirus appear to be less severely affected. It is nevertheless important to do your best to follow this guidance.

Children who are part of a household that is following guidance on staying at home due to possible coronavirus should take exercise within their home. Children who are part of a household that is following guidance on staying at home due to possible coronavirus should not be attending school or any childcare settings even if they are children of key workers.

Children should also be encouraged to follow good hygiene – frequent handwashing with soap and water and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

## Other advice on staying at home

The [Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus](#) contains more detailed guidance on what to do about cleaning, disposal of waste, laundry and other useful information.

## If you or your family need to seek medical advice

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness or the illness in any household members is worsening. If it's not an emergency, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For any emergency conditions, if you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the call handler or operator if you or your relative have coronavirus symptoms as well as any emergency conditions.

All routine medical and dental appointments should usually be cancelled whilst you and the family are staying at home. If you are concerned or have been asked to attend in person within the period you are home isolating, discuss this with your medical contact first (for example, your GP, local hospital or outpatient service), using the number they have provided. If your concerns are related to your coronavirus symptoms contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

## Looking after your wellbeing while staying at home

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.

It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the [Every Mind Matters website](#).

Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have not minded staying at home for a week have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films.

Daily physical activity is important for health and wellbeing, including managing stress, positive feelings and sleep. You can look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the [NHS website](#). If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home. For family members who are 70 or over and are not symptomatic, it is important to avoid contact with other family members as much as possible (see guidance above on [persons age 70 or over](#)).

Many people find it helpful to remind themselves why what they are doing is so important. Hopefully, none of your family will suffer more than flu-like symptoms. But some people are badly affected by coronavirus, and particularly the elderly and those with certain medical conditions. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

Remember it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust and in doing so you may end up providing support to them too. Or you can use a [NHS recommended helpline](#).

See more [Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

## Ending household isolation

If living with others, then the 14-day period starts when they remain well may end household isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period begins from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If any other family members become unwell during the 14-day household-isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.

A COVID-19 cough or [anosmia](#) may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough or anosmia does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days

Should a household member develop coronavirus [symptoms](#) late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for at least 7 days. The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation. See the [explanatory diagram](#).

All members of the household should continue to follow government guidelines on [Staying at home and away from others \(social distancing\)](#) and [Social distancing for everyone in the UK](#).

## What can you do to reduce the risk of becoming unwell with coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If you are aged 70 or over, or are otherwise clinically vulnerable, you should refer to our guidance on [social distancing for everyone in the UK](#).

If you live with someone who is aged 70 or over, or is otherwise clinically vulnerable, you should refer to our [household guidance](#) and guidance on [Staying at home and away from others](#).

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you should follow the guidance on [shielding](#).

Members of a household, living with someone who is extremely vulnerable should be very strict in following guidance on [social distancing](#).

## Make a plan for your household or family

Make a plan for how you can adapt your daily routine, and that of others in your household, in case a member of your household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and you are required to undertake household isolation. Some of the ways in which you could prepare include:

- talk to your neighbours and family and exchange phone numbers
- consider and plan for those in your home who are aged 70 or over, or otherwise clinically vulnerable.
- create a contact list with phone numbers of neighbours, schools, employer, chemist, NHS 111
- set up online shopping accounts if possible

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