![Public Health England logo]

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Stay at home: What to do if you or someone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus or has been told they have coronavirus after having a test

February 2021

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for people who:

- have symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus, including people waiting for a test result

- have had a coronavirus test that says they have the virus, even if they do not have any symptoms

- live in the same house as someone who has coronavirus symptoms

- live in the same house as someone who has had test results to say that they have coronavirus

- people in your support bubble or childcare bubble also have to follow these rules

There is different guidance if you have been close to someone you do not live with who has had test results to say they have coronavirus.

This guidance is for England.

Symptoms of coronavirus

The most important symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature (your back and chest feel hot to touch)

- a new cough where you keep on coughing. This means coughing a lot for more than an hour or coughing a lot more than normal 3 times in a day

- losing or there being a change to your sense of smell or taste

If you have any of these symptoms stay home and arrange to have a test.

Tests for coronavirus

There are 2 main types of test to find out if someone has coronavirus.

1. PCR tests.

These are the most reliable coronavirus tests.

It takes some time to get the results because the samples are sent away.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, you should arrange to have a PCR test.

2. LFD tests

These are quick and easy to use but are not as reliable as PCR tests.

LFD tests are good at finding out if people have lots of coronavirus in their body. They are mostly used to test people who do not have any symptoms.

They are often used on people like teachers or care workers who need to get tested a lot and need to know the result quickly.

Main messages	
	If you have coronavirus symptoms, or been told you have coronavirus after having a test you **must** stay at home and away from other people.
	This is because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you don't have symptoms.
	If NHS Test and Trace contact you and tell you to stay home and away from other people you **must** do what they say.
	If you do not you could be fined. This means you will have to pay money for breaking the rules.
	If you are told you to stay home and away from other people by NHS Test and Trace you may be able to claim a one off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.
	It may be hard for some people to stay away from other people who live in their house but everyone must still do their best to follow this guidance.

What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus or a test says you have coronavirus

Stay home and away from other people

Anyone who has coronavirus symptoms must stay at home straight away.

Other people who live in your house must stay home and away from other people too.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus and have not had a test arrange to have a PCR test.

Stay at home whether you are waiting for a home test kit to be delivered, an appointment at a test site or a test result.
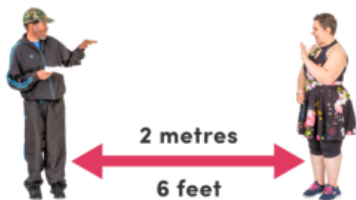
You can only leave your home for a few reasons.

If you are reading this online click here to see the reasons you can leave home.

Do not:

go to work, shops, school or any places outside your home where there might be other people

use buses, trains, trams or taxis

have visitors come to your house

If you need to leave home to go to a test site you must be strict about following advice about keeping away from other people.

Go home straight away after you have had your test.

How long to stay at home for

If NHS Test and Trace contact you to say you have coronavirus you **must** stay home and away from other people.

If you have symptoms the staying at home time starts from the **first day** your symptoms started.

If you do not have symptoms the staying at home time starts from when your test was taken.

Yor staying at home time includes the day your symptoms started, or if you don't have symptoms the day your test was taken, **and the next 10 full days.**

For example, if:

- your symptoms started any time on the 15th of the month, or
- you never had symptoms but a test was taken on the 15th of the month
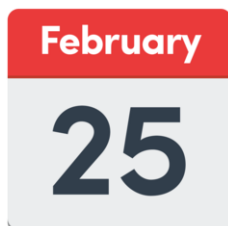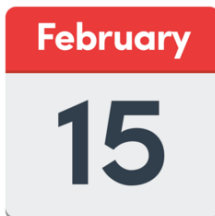
your staying at home time would end at 12 o'clock at night on the 25th of the month.

You **must** stay home for the **whole** time.

You can go back to normal after 10 full days if:

- your symptoms have gone completely, or

- the only symptoms you have are a cough or change to sense of taste or smell.

If you still have a high temperature after 10 days or still don't feel right, stay at home and seek medical advice.
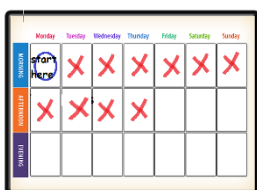
If you are staying at home because of a test result and you develop symptoms stay home for **10 more full days** from the day after your symptoms started.
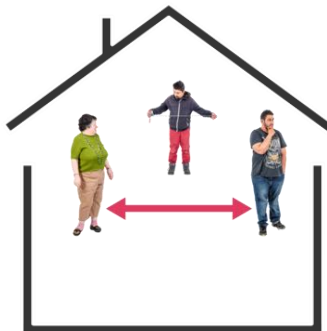
If you develop symptoms at any time after your staying at home time has ended you and the people who live in your house should follow the steps in this guidance again.

Most people with coronavirus will only feel a bit poorly.

If you or someone living in your house starts to feel worse then get medical advice straight away.

Stay away from other people who live in your house especially if they might get very poorly from coronavirus.

Try not to use kitchens and other shared spaces when other people are using them.

Try to take meals back to your room to eat.

|	
	Wear a face covering or a mask when spending time in shared areas inside your home.
	Exercise in your home, garden or private outdoor space.
	Follow the general advice to reduce the spread of the infection in your house.

What to do if you have symptoms but have been told you do not have coronavirus after having a test

	You may have another virus such as a cold or flu.
	You should stay at home until you feel better.
	Seek medical attention if you are concerned about your symptoms.

You can stop staying home all of the time as long as:

- you are well

- no-one else who lives in your house has symptoms or has been told they have coronavirus after having a test

- you have not been advised to stay home and away from other people by NHS Test and Trace

Other people who live in your house do not need to stay home and away from other people any more.

Testing after your stay at home time has ended

If you have had coronavirus, you will probably have less chance of catching the virus again.

This is called developing immunity.
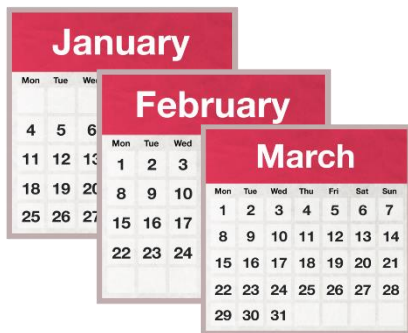
Scientists don't know if everyone will develop immunity or how long it will last.

There is a chance that a PCR test will say you have coronavirus for a while after you were infected.

Anyone who has been told they have coronavirus after having a PCR test should not get tested again for **90 days** after they had their test unless they develop new symptoms.

If you do have an LFD test in the 90 days after you had the PCR test and the LFD test says you have the virus, you and the people you live with must start your staying at home time again and follow the steps in this guidance again.

If more than 90 days has gone past since a test said you had coronavirus and you have new symptoms or a PCR test or LFD test says you have coronavirus follow the steps in this guidance again.

What to do if you work in a care home, the NHS or a primary school

There are special arrangements for people who work in care homes, the NHS or primary schools and for other people who get tested regularly because of their job.

If this is the case for you and an LFD test result says you have coronavirus, you and the people you live with should stay home and follow the steps above.

You should also arrange to have a PCR test.

If this PCR test shows you have coronavirus, you and the people you live with must finish the staying at home time.

If this PCR test says you don't have coronavirus, **and** you have no symptoms you and the people you live with can stop staying home and away from other people.

NHS Test and Trace

If you have received a positive test result, NHS Test and Trace will email or phone or text you and ask you for information about your symptoms.

The 3 main symptoms of coronavirus are a cough, high temperature or loss of smell or taste. These are used to decide when someone should have a test and what day they should start staying at home.

You might have had other symptoms before developing any of the 3 main ones.

If you did, when you started having them will be used to work out who you have been close to.

You will be asked about who you have been close to recently so they can get advice about what to do. They will not be told who you are.

It is very important that you give this information, as it helps to protect your family, friends and the community.

If you are asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, you might be able to get a payment of £500 from your council under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

If you don't stay home after NHS Test and Trace have been in touch with you, you could get fined. This means you will have to pay money because you broke the rules.

To stop coronavirus spreading it is very important you stay home straight away after finding out you have the virus.

If you live in the same house as someone with coronavirus

If you live in the same house as another person who has coronavirus you also need to stay home and away from other people as you could have the virus too.

Do not:

go to work, school, shops or any places outside your home where there might be other people

use buses, trains, trams or taxis

You should stay at home for 10 full days from the day after the person you live with started having symptoms or had their test.

You do not need to have a test unless you develop symptoms, or if are part of a testing programme for people who do not have symptoms.

During your 10 day staying at home time you **must stay home** even if you have a test result say you do not have the virus.

Stay home for the full 10 days because you could still give the infection to others.

If you develop symptoms during your staying at home time arrange to have a PCR test. Click here to find out how.

If the test says you have coronavirus follow the advice for people who have the virus and stay at home for another 10 days.

The 10 days start from the day after you started having symptoms.

This could mean you need to stay home for longer than 10 days.

If other people who live in your house get symptoms during this time you do not need to stay at home for longer than 10 days.

If NHS Test and Trace tell you that you must stay home because you have been close to someone who has coronavirus, you might be able to get a £500 payment from your council.

Click to find out about Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

If you do not stay home and away from other peope you could have to pay a fine. Fines start at £1000.

Parents or guardians are responsible for making sure anyone under the age of 18 stays home if NHS Test and Trace advises them to do so.

Visitors to your house

Do not invite people to come into your home who do not need to be there, including friends and family.

If you want to speak to someone who does not live in your house, use the phone, email or social media.

If you, a family member or someone else you live with receive support in your home, carers should continue to visit and follow the provision of home care guidance to stop the virus spreading.

Unless it is to do an urgent job, visits from people doing work on your house should be delayed until the 10 days of keeping separate from others is finished.

How coronavirus spreads

Coronavirus spreads:

- from one person to another

- through the air

- when people touch things someone with coronavirus has touched, or coughed or sneezed on

Coronavirus spreads the most:

- when people are close to each other

- in indoor places that have no fresh air

- when people spend time in the same room

The most important ways of stopping the virus spreading are:

- keeping 1 metre away
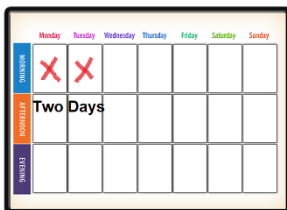
- washing your hands

- catching sneezes and coughs in tissues

- cleaning surfaces

- letting fresh air into rooms

People who have coronavirus can pass it on for up about 2 days **before** they feel poorly and for up to 10 days **after**.

They can pass the virus to others even if they have no symptoms.

People who live in the same house a someone with coronavirus are at high risk of catching the virus themselves and spreading the disease to others.This is why they must stay at home.

How to stay away from other people in your house if you have coronavirus

Stay out of shared spaces like kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas as much as you can especially if other people are in them.

Take your meals back to your room to eat. Ask the people you live with to help by bringing your meals to your door.

Be strict about staying 2 metres away from other people.
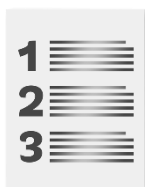
Use a separate bathroom if you can. If you can't do this try to use the bathroom last.

Clean the bathroom before and after you use it.

Use different towels to other people.

	Let fresh air in by opening a window to the outside.
	Use a face covering or a mask when spending time in shared areas inside your home.
	You should still do your best to stay apart from people who live in your house.
	You can find more advice on keeping safe from coronavirus in your home at GermDefence.
	People who might get very poorly from coronavirus should stay apart from people who live in their house even if they do not have coronavirus symptoms.

How to stop the virus spreading

	Everyone should do these things to stop the virus spreading: **Wash your hands** • Wash your hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or use a hand sanitiser (gel)

This is especially important:

- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose

- before you eat or handle food

Wash your hands often and try not to touch your face.

Cover coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze.

Put dirty tissues into a rubbish bag and wash your hands straight away.

If you have a carer, they should use disposable tissues to wipe your face after you have sneezed or coughed and then wash their hands.

Clean your home

Use your usual cleaning products to clean things that people touch a lot, like door handles and remote controls.

Clean shared spaces like bathrooms and kitchens often as well.

This is especially important if someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus lives in your house.

Put dirty cloths, tissues and disposable face coverings in a bag you can throw away.

Wait at least 3 days before putting this bag out with your usual rubbish.

Use a dishwasher or if this is not possible, wash dishes well using washing up liquid and warm water and dry them using a clean tea towel.

Laundry

Wash dirty clothes as usual but don't shake them before you put them in the basket or the washing machine.

If you do not have a washing machine wait for 3 days before you take dirty clothes to the launderette

Use different towels to other people.

Fresh air

Let fresh air in by opening windows and doors if this is safe to do so.

Run the extractor fan in your bathroom for longer than usual with the door shut.

Looking after pets

In this country coronavirus is spread between people.

Pets are unlikely to catch coronavirus but it's best not to touch them too much if you have the virus.

Sometimes this is hard so wash your hands a lot before and after touching your pet.

Looking after your feelings

Staying at home and away from others can be frustrating and lonely for some people.

Try to talk to others in your house and to anyone coming in to your house to give you support.

Talk to family and friends by phone, email, text or social media.

You can get lots of information about looking after your mental health and wellbeing and on supporting children and young people online.

Every Mind Matters gives tips and advice to take better care of yourself, including advice for those staying at home because of the coronavirus.

Remember that by staying at home you are helping to keep other people safe.

Things you can do to make staying at home easier

Keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media.

Remember that doing physical exercise can be good for you.

If you go on the internet there are online classes that can help you do exercise in your home.

Talk to people about what you will need to be able to stay at home for the 10 days.

Ask support workers, friends and family for help to get the things you will need while staying at home.

They will not be able to come into the house but should be able to bring things that you need to your door for you.

Think about things you can do on your own during your time at home such as games, cooking, reading, online learning and watching films.

What to do if you need medical advice

If you had any doctors or dentists appointments planned from before you had to stay at home don't go to them. Get in touch to explain why.

If you start to feel worse then don't ignore it. You can contact the NHS 111 online coronavirus service or phone NHS 111 for other health problems.

If you feel much worse and are worried that it is an emergency dial 999 for an ambulance.

Tell the person answering that someone in your house has coronavirus or symptoms.

Getting help with money and other support

Staying home and away from other people is the most important way to help stop coronavirus spreading.

This is the only way to make sure you do not give the virus to someone else and make them poorly if:

- you have coronavirus symptoms

- have been told you have coronavirus after having a test

- have been told you have been close to someone who has coronavirus

This is why if you are told to stay home and away from others you **must** do this straight away.

To find out what help you can get click here.

Ask your friends and family for help to get the things you need while staying at home.

If you work ask your boss for help.

For more information about help to get food and other things you need click here.

Check if there are volunteers in your local community who can help you.

Ask friends or family to drop food off or order food online or by phone.

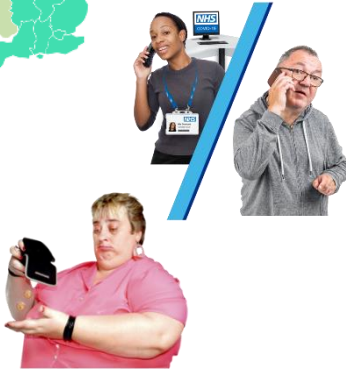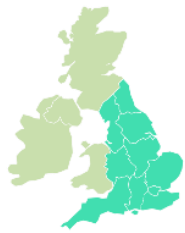Make sure these are left outside your door for you to collect.

If you have a job and can't go to work because of coronavirus you can check guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions by clicking here.

You might be able to get a one-off payment of £500 if you told to stay at home because of coronavirus.

You can apply online by clicking here.

You will have to be able to say yes to everything on this list:

- you live in England
- you have been asked to stay home by NHS Test and Trace
- you normally have a paid job or work for yourself
- you can't work from home and will not get paid

You also have to be claiming one or more of these benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credits
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Pension Credit or Housing Benefit

Look on your local council's website for information.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best way of feeding your baby.

Scientists have found no proof that coronavirus is spread through breast milk.

If you are worried about breast feeding because of coronavirus, talk to your doctor or health visitor or midwife on the phone.

Babies can catch coronavirus the same as everyone else but children do not get as poorly as adults.

If you are bottle feeding your baby don't share bottles with anyone else and sterilise everything you use carefully.

You can get more information by clicking here.

People with learning disabilities, autistic people and people with mental ill health

It might be harder for some people to follow this guidance.

It is important you and people close to you stay safe and well.

If you have a care plan you should follow that and do your best to follow the guidance.

The pictures in this summary are from Photosymbols: https://www.photosymbols.com/
https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/breastfeeding/
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/sterilising-baby-bottles/ https://covid19.nhs.uk/