



UK Health
Security
Agency

What to do if you have COVID-19 or you've been in contact with someone who has COVID-19

A guide for people who live in England



Easy read booklet

Updated February 2022

Contents



About this booklet [page 3](#).

Symptoms of COVID-19 [page 5](#).

People at high risk from COVID-19 [page 8](#).

Tests for COVID-19 [page 10](#).

If you have COVID-19 [page 12](#).

How long should you stay at home and not see other people [page 14](#).

How to help stop the spread of COVID-19 [page 15](#).

If you need to leave your home while you have COVID-19 [page 17](#).

If you've been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 [page 18](#).

If you need medical advice [page 20](#).

If you need help with your mental health [page 21](#).

If you have a learning disability, autism or a serious mental illness [page 22](#).

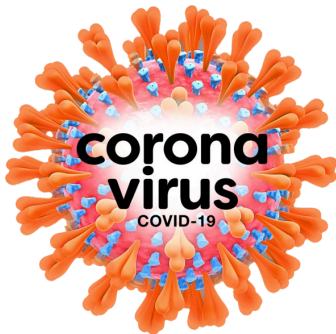
Volunteer support [page 22](#).



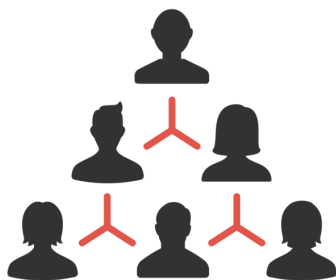
About this booklet



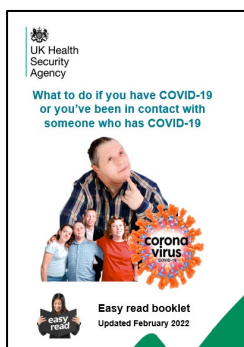
This booklet is a guide for people who have **COVID-19** or have been in contact with someone who has **COVID-19**.



COVID-19 is a virus which can make you ill. **COVID-19** is also called **coronavirus**.



It's easy to spread COVID-19. This means it's easy to catch it and easy to pass it on to other people.

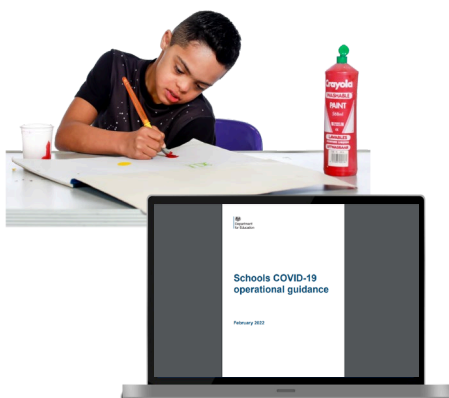


The Government has written advice for us to follow about COVID-19. This booklet tells you what the current advice is.



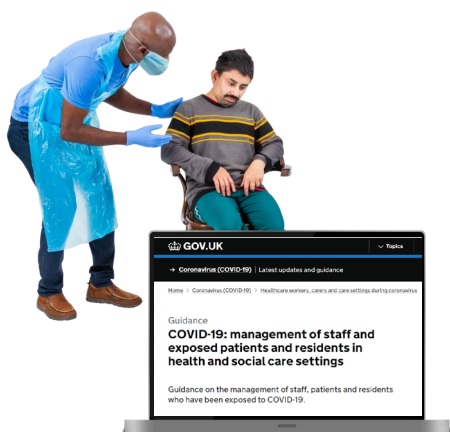
You should follow the advice in this booklet if:

- you have any of the main **symptoms** of COVID-19. Read more on [page 5](#)
- you get a positive **COVID-19 test** result. Read more on [page 10](#)
- you live with someone who has COVID-19
- you've been in contact with someone who has COVID-19



There is extra advice for children and young people who normally go to a childcare place or school. Go to this website link

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/
government/uploads/system/uploads/
attachment_data/file/1057106/220224
Schools_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057106/220224_Schools_guidance.pdf)



There is different advice if you are a health or social care worker. Go to this website

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-
19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-
workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings)

Symptoms of COVID-19

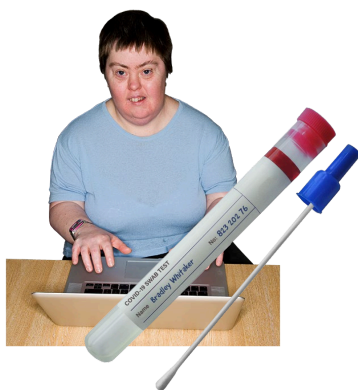


Symptoms are the way an illness makes you feel. The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a new **continuous** cough. **Continuous** means a cough that doesn't stop
- a high **temperature**. **Temperature** means how hot your body is
- you can't smell or taste like normal. This is called **anosmia**



Most people who get COVID-19 don't get very ill.



If you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 you should order a **PCR test**.

Read more on [page 10](#).



You should stay at home and not see other people while you wait for your PCR test result.



There is extra advice for people **at high risk** from COVID-19 who might be able to try new treatments. Go to this website www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/



At high risk means you're more likely to get seriously ill if you get COVID-19. Read more on [page 8](#).



Other symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- finding it hard to breathe
- feeling tired
- not wanting to eat anything
- aching muscles
- a sore throat
- a headache
- a blocked or runny nose
- diarrhoea
- feeling or being sick



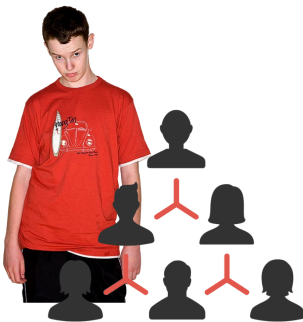
COVID-19 might not be the reason you have these symptoms. You can get all of these symptoms because of other illnesses.



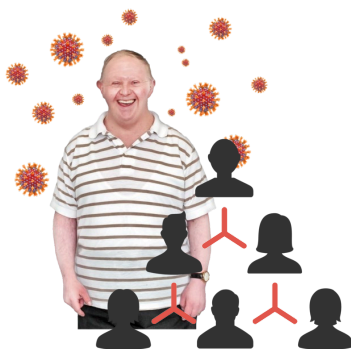
If you're worried about your symptoms or they are getting worse, call **111** or speak to your doctor. If it's an emergency, call **999**.



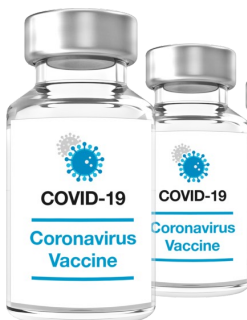
Most children and young people who get COVID-19 don't get very ill or don't have any symptoms.



Children or young people with symptoms of COVID-19 are more likely to pass the virus on to other people than those who don't have COVID-19.



If you're **fully vaccinated**, you are less likely to get very ill from COVID-19 but you can still catch it and pass it on to other people even if you don't have symptoms.



Fully vaccinated means you have had two doses of an authorised COVID-19 vaccine.

People at high risk from COVID-19



COVID-19 can make anyone seriously ill, but some people are at high risk of serious illness.

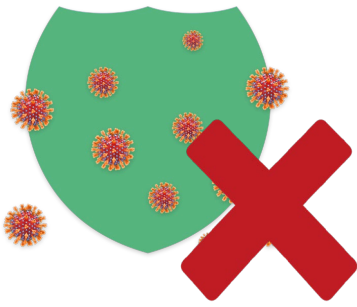


For most people, getting fully vaccinated lowers the risk of serious illness.



People at high risk from COVID-19 include:

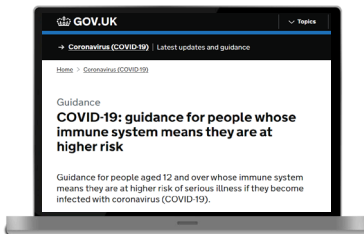
- older people
- people who are pregnant
- people who aren't vaccinated
- people who have a **weakened immune system**
- people who have some **long-term health conditions**



A **weakened immune system** is when your body can't protect itself from illnesses.

Go to this website to find out more

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk



Some **long-term health conditions** make you at high risk from COVID-19. Go to this website to find out more

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/



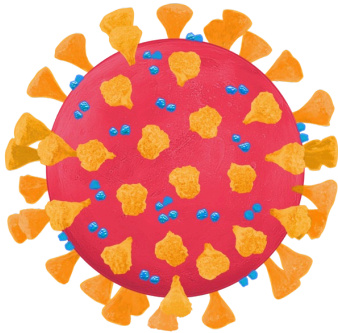
You don't always know if someone you have contact with is at high risk from COVID-19.



This means you should always follow the advice in this booklet to keep yourself and people around you safe.

Tests for COVID-19

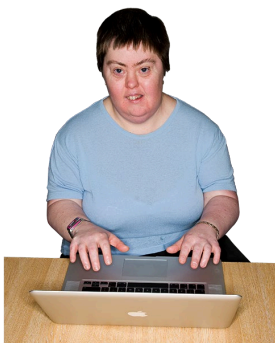
PCR Tests



Polymerase chain reaction tests (called **PCR** tests for short) are the best way to find out if people with symptoms and people who might need treatment have COVID-19.



If you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 you should take a PCR test.



You can order a PCR test online. Go to this website to find out more

www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

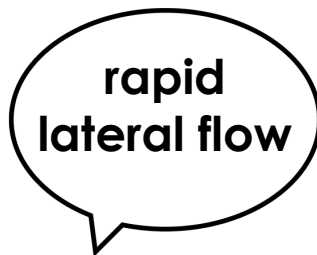


You should stay at home and not see other people while you wait for your PCR test result.

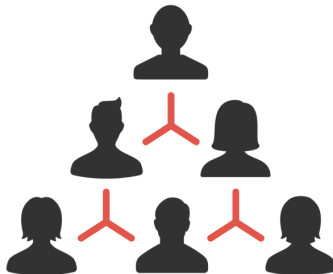
LFD Tests



Lateral flow device tests (called **LFD** tests for short) are a quick and easy way to find out if you have high levels of COVID-19 in your body but don't have any symptoms.



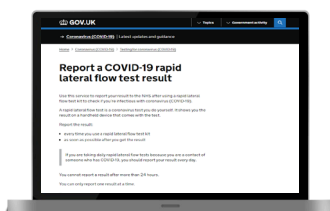
These tests can also be called **rapid lateral flow** tests.



A positive LFD test result means you could pass COVID-19 on to other people. It means you probably have COVID-19.



LFD tests can be taken at home which is called a **self-reported** test, or with help from a trained assistant which is called an **assisted** test.



It's important to report your LFD test results. Go to this website to report a result www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

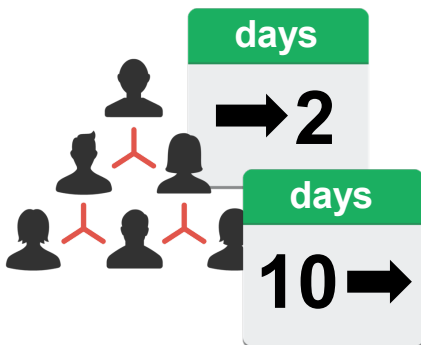
If you have COVID-19



If you have COVID-19, the advice is to stay at home and not see other people.



If you do this, you're less likely to pass COVID-19 on to other people.



You can pass COVID-19 on to other people from around 2 days before your symptoms start and for up to 10 days after.



You can pass COVID-19 on to other people even if you have **mild** symptoms or no symptoms. **Mild** means not bad.



If you have COVID-19:

- don't go to work, or work from home if you can
- ask friends, family, neighbours or **volunteers** to bring what you need and leave it outside your home
- don't have visitors in your home
- don't have workmen in your home
- cancel any medical or dental appointments that aren't urgent
- tell anyone you've been in contact with about your positive test result so they can follow the advice in this booklet

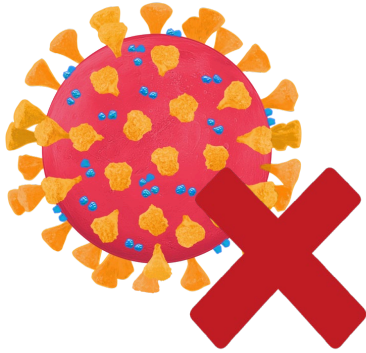


Volunteers are people who do work or offer help for free. Read more on [page 22](#).



Don't see people who are at high risk from COVID-19 for 10 days after your symptoms start or you get a positive test result if you don't have symptoms.

How long you should stay at home and not see other people



Lots of people won't be **infectious** to other people after 5 days. **Infectious** means you have COVID-19 and can pass it on to other people.



You can take an LFD test from 5 days after your COVID-19 symptoms start or you get a positive test result if you don't have symptoms.



If you get a negative test result on this day and a negative test result on the next day, and you don't have a high temperature, you can return to your normal daily life.



The same advice should be followed for children and young people. The advice given by their childcare place or school should also be followed.

How to help stop the spread of COVID-19



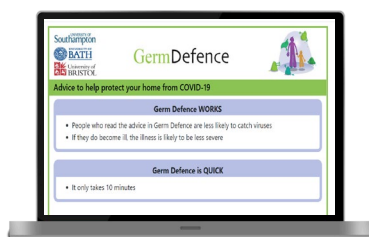
COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, **aerosols** or touch. **Aerosols** are tiny bits of liquid that hang in the air.



It can also be on the surface of items or belongings when a person who has COVID-19 has touched or coughed on them.



There is a higher risk of catching COVID-19 or passing it on to other people in crowded or indoor places, and when you do some activities like singing or energetic exercise.



You can read advice about how to help stop the spread of COVID-19 on the **Germ Defence** website

www.germdefence.org/index.html



When you have COVID-19, there is a high risk of passing it on to people you live with.

To help stop this happening:

- stay away from people you live with, especially people who aren't vaccinated or who are at high risk from COVID-19
- spend as little time as possible in shared areas like kitchens or living rooms
- wear a face covering that fits well, or a surgical face mask
- wash your hands well and often
- cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- use and get rid of tissues properly and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after
- regularly clean items and areas that get touched a lot, like door handles, remote controls, bathrooms and kitchens
- leave windows open for 10 minutes or more after you leave a room
- leave extractor fans on for longer than normal with the door closed
- use a different bathroom or use the bathroom after everyone else

If you need to leave your home while you have COVID-19



You should try to stay at home and not see other people while you have COVID-19.

If you do need to leave your home, follow the advice below to lower the risk of passing COVID-19 on to other people:

- wear a face covering that fits well, or a surgical face mask
- don't see people who are at high risk from COVID-19
- don't go to crowded or indoor spaces
- don't go to big social events
- if you need to use buses or trains, don't use them at busy times of day
- try not to see people you don't live with
- if you do see other people, meet them outside and stay 2 metres apart
- exercise in outside spaces
- cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- don't touch surfaces with unclean hands



If you've been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19



You're at highest risk of catching COVID-19 if you live with someone who has COVID-19.

You're also at risk if you stay overnight at the home of someone who has COVID-19



If you've been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19:

- don't see the person who has COVID-19
- don't see people who are at high risk from COVID-19
- work from home if you can
- try not to see people you don't live with, especially in crowded or indoor spaces
- wear a face covering that fits well, or a surgical face mask if you're in crowded or indoor spaces
- order a PCR test if you start to get any of the main symptoms of COVID-19. Stay at home and don't see other people while you wait for your PCR test result



Follow this advice for 10 days after the symptoms of the person you live with or stayed with started or they got a positive test result if they didn't have symptoms.



Children and young people who live with someone who has COVID-19 should carry on going to childcare or school.



If you've been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 but you don't live with them and haven't stayed overnight with them, you're at lower risk of catching COVID-19.



You should still follow the advice in this booklet about how to stay safe and help stop the spread of COVID-19.

If you need medical advice



If you have COVID-19 and you are worried about your health, or you have a medical appointment booked during the time you need to stay at home, talk to your doctor or health worker.



Health and care services are open for people with all health conditions including COVID-19.

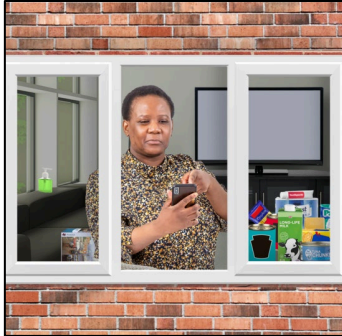


If it's not an emergency, go to this website 111.nhs.uk or call this phone number **NHS 111**.



If it is an emergency, call **999** for an ambulance. Tell the person who answers if the emergency is because of COVID-19.

If you need help with your mental health



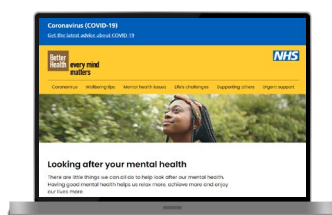
It can be hard when you have to stay at home and self-isolate.



You might feel lonely or you might find it difficult if you don't have a garden or an outside space.



It's important to look after your mind as well as your body.



Every Mind Matters has advice about looking after your mental health.

Go to this website to read more

www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/

If you have a learning disability, autism or a serious mental illness



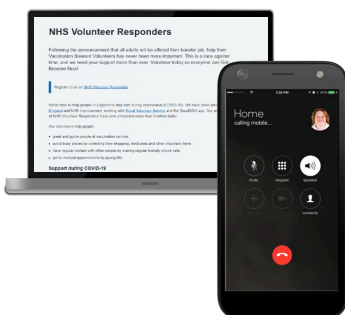
If you have a learning disability, autism or a serious mental illness, you might not be able to follow all the advice in this guide.

You should do the best you can to keep yourself and the people around you safe.

Volunteer support



The **NHS Volunteer Responders** programme is a service with volunteers who can support you. They can help with things like collecting and delivering shopping or medicine, or calling for a friendly chat.



Go to this website

nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk

or call this telephone number **0808 196 3646**.

You can call from 8am to 8pm every day.