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1. Home (https://www.gov.uk/)
2. Coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon)
3. Health and wellbeing during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/health-and-wellbeing)
4. Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person)

- Public Health England (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

Guidance

Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person

Updated 28 September 2020

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New legal requirements for self-isolation

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If you live with a person who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or has had a positive test result, follow the Stay at Home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

If you have been in close contact with, but do not live with, a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, follow the guidance below. This may include people in your support bubble.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for people who have been notified by NHS Test and Trace that they are a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19.

This guidance explains what you should do if the NHS Test and Trace service notifies you that you are a contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and you do not live with that person.

The NHS Test and Trace service will notify you by text message, email or phone.

What is meant by a 'contact'

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested

positive for COVID-19

- sexual partners
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
  - being coughed on
  - having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
  - contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

Contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 need to self-isolate at home because they are at risk of developing symptoms themselves in the next 14 days and could spread the virus to others before the symptoms begin

If you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, then you will be notified by the NHS Test and Trace service via text message, email or phone. If you are notified, please follow the guidance in this document closely.

If you have not been notified that you are a contact, this means you do not need to self-isolate and should follow the general guidance, for example, social distancing, hand-washing, and covering coughs and sneezes.

This guidance does not include health care workers and others working in health and social care settings, who should follow separate guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings).

What is a 'support bubble'?

Adults who live alone or with dependent children only can, if they wish, now form a support bubble with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to spend time together inside each other's homes, including overnight, without needing to stay 2 metres apart. Further information about support bubbles can be found in the guidance for making a support bubble with another household (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household). If you are in a support bubble and have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, you may be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service and asked to follow this guidance.

Main messages

If you have been informed that you are a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19, you must self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of your last contact with them. You could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and instructed to do so.

Stay at home for 14 days and follow the self-isolation guidance below. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis.

You are at risk of developing COVID-19 for the next 14 days. Since we now know that people can become infectious up to 2 days before symptoms begin, you could spread the disease to others if you do not go into self-isolation.

Even if you never develop symptoms, you can still be infected and pass the virus on without knowing it.

You should not arrange for testing unless you develop symptoms of COVID-19. The most important symptoms are: a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19, other people in your household do not need to self-isolate at home with you.

Take steps to reduce the possible spread of infection in your home: for example, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser.

If anyone you live with is clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable stay away from them as much as possible, following the guidance here. For the clinically extremely vulnerable, follow the shielding guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19).

How will I be told I am a contact?

The NHS Test and Trace service will get in touch with anyone who is a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 by text message, email or phone.

What should I do if I am a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If you have been informed that you are a contact, you must self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of your last contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Self-isolation means you must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.

It is very important that you follow this advice even if you feel well, as symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear from your last contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Self-isolating in this way will help protect your family, friends, the wider community and the

NHS.

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I think I have had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, but I have not been notified and advised to self-isolate. What should I do?

Contacts who need to self-isolate will be notified and advised accordingly by the NHS Test and Trace service. If you have not been notified, this means you do not need to self-isolate.

If you are concerned that you may have symptoms of coronavirus, or you live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus, follow the Stay at Home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

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Self-isolation guidance

Stay at home for 14 days after your last contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis.

Do not go outside even to buy food or other essentials, and any exercise must be taken within your home.

Self-isolating at home for the 14-day period will help protect your family, friends and the NHS. Self-isolating at home in this way can also protect the most vulnerable in society, by reducing the chance of a second wave of COVID-19 in the wider community.

If you are living with children, keep following this guidance to the best of your ability, however, we are aware that not all these measures will be possible.

Not all these measures will be possible if you, or those you are living with, have significant conditions such as learning disabilities, autism or serious mental illness. Please keep following this guidance to the best of your ability, while keeping yourself and those close to you safe and well, ideally in line with any existing care plans.

If you live with clinically vulnerable people or clinically extremely vulnerable people, stay away from them as much as possible, following this guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19). For the clinically extremely vulnerable please follow the shielding guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19).

If you do not develop symptoms of COVID-19 while self-isolating at home

You must self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of your last contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, even if you do not have any symptoms.

If you do not develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should not arrange for testing.

Your household does not need to self-isolate with you if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but they should take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing, handwashing and respiratory hygiene. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or relatives.

Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online. Delivery drivers should not come into your home, so make sure you ask them to leave items outside for collection.

Further guidance on accessing food and essential supplies (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-accessing-food-and-essential-supplies) is available.

If you are an employee and unable to work from home, please refer to this guidance (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-and-support-for-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19) from the Department for Work and Pensions to find out about the support that is available to you to help you to self-isolate.

Staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some, but you can do things to help make it easier (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing) or access the Every Mind Matters (https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/) website.

What to do if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 during your 14 days of self-isolation at home

For most people, COVID-19 will be a mild illness. However, if you develop symptoms, stay isolating at home and arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 – visit NHS.UK (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/) to arrange or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access.

As soon as you start having symptoms, you and anyone in your household should follow the Stay at Home: Guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

If your test is negative, then you must still complete the full 14 days of self-isolation, as you could still develop COVID-19. You should continue to follow the advice provided in this guidance.

Do the people I live with also need to self-isolate at home with me for 14 days?

If you are a contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, but you do not have symptoms, other people living with you do not need to self-isolate and should follow the general guidance.

If you do develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 – visit NHS.UK (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/) to arrange or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access. If you live with other people, they will need to begin self-isolation at home while you

wait for your test result. Follow the Stay at Home: Guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

Self-isolating at home for the 14-day period will help protect your family, friends and the NHS. Self-isolating at home in this way can also protect the most vulnerable in society, by reducing the chance of a second wave of COVID-19 in the wider community.

What should I do if I live with someone who develops COVID-19 symptoms?

If someone you live with develops symptoms, they will need to self-isolate at home along with all the other people who live with them; this will include you.

They will need to arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19 – visit NHS.UK (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/) to arrange or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access.

They and the people who live with them should follow Stay at Home: Guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

Practise good hand and respiratory hygiene

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, dry thoroughly or use hand sanitiser. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Cover coughs and sneezes.

Many people who are self-isolating find it helpful to remind themselves why what they are doing is so important. Some people are badly affected by COVID-19, particularly the clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others; your friends, family and the wider community, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

I think I have been in close contact with someone who is being tested for COVID-19, but they do not yet have a test result. What should I do?

At this stage, you do not need to self-isolate. You should take extra care in practising social distancing and good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Contacts of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 infection who need to self-isolate will be notified accordingly by the NHS Test and Trace service. If you have not been notified, this means you do not need to self-isolate.

What should I do if I develop symptoms of COVID-19 AFTER my 14 days of self-isolation at home?

If after 14 days of self-isolation you develop symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate again and arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 – visit NHS.UK (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/) to arrange or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access.

Follow Stay at Home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance). If you live with other people, they will also need to self-isolate while awaiting your test results.

If your result is positive, you must self-isolate for 10 days. Other household members will need to self-isolate again for 14 days.

Will I need to self-isolate if I previously tested positive for COVID-19 but have now been notified that I am a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19?

If you have previously tested positive for COVID-19, you will probably have developed some short-term immunity to the disease. However, it is not certain that will happen for everyone who has had COVID-19, nor do we know how long any immunity to the disease might last.

If you are notified that you are a contact of someone who has had a positive test result for COVID-19, you must immediately self-isolate and follow this guidance.

Self-isolating at home for 14 days is very important even if you have already had COVID-19. This will help protect your family, friends and the NHS. You will be helping to protect the most vulnerable in society, by limiting the spread of infection in the wider community and reducing the chance of a second wave of COVID-19.

If you start to have symptoms of COVID-19, you should arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 – visit NHS.UK (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/) or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access. Follow the Stay at Home: Guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

New legal requirements for self-isolation

You could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate following a positive test result for COVID-19, or if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and instructed to self-isolate because you are a contact of someone who has had a positive test result. If you test positive for COVID-19, it will also be an offence to knowingly provide false information about your close contacts to NHS Test and Trace. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a fine of up to £10,000. These regulations will only apply in England.

You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate. Local authorities will be putting arrangements in place to make these payments, with further details to be made available shortly. You will be eligible if you live in England and meet all the following criteria:

- you have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- you are employed or self-employed
- you cannot work from home and will lose income as a result
- you are claiming at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Working Tax Credits, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit or Housing Benefit