



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>)

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

Guidance

COVID-19: guidance for young people on shielding and protecting people most likely to become unwell if they catch coronavirus

Updated 5 May 2020

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-on-protecting-people-most-likely-to-get-unwell-from-coronavirus-shielding-young-peoples-version>

COVID-19 is a new type of coronavirus that causes illness in people by affecting their lungs and therefore their breathing. It can spread from person to person by coughing or touching surfaces or areas of skin that have been contaminated by (come into contact with) the virus.

COVID-19 is called this because it was named on 31 December 2019. In this guidance, we are going to refer to it as coronavirus (COVID-19).

Symptoms

The symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a. a high temperature
- b. a new continuous cough, meaning coughing a lot for more than an hour or experiencing 3 or more episodes of coughing in a day

Extremely clinically vulnerable people

Some adults and young people have health conditions that mean they are more likely to get very unwell and might have to go to hospital if they catch coronavirus (COVID-19). These people are described as being extremely clinically vulnerable (<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#who-is-clinically-extremely-vulnerable>) and include those who:

1. have had a solid organ transplant – kidney, liver, pancreas, heart, or lung
2. are having treatments for some cancers
3. have severe long-term lung disease including cystic fibrosis and severe asthma
4. have rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that increase their risk of infection
5. are on medication that compromises their immune system and so are much more likely to get infections and become seriously unwell from them
6. are pregnant with significant heart disease

This guidance is for all adults and young people who are most likely to become very unwell if they catch coronavirus (COVID-19), wherever they live or usually spend their time. This could be:

- in their own home
- in a care home
- at school
- at a special school (for example a school for young people with special educational needs)
- at university

Shielding for extremely clinically vulnerable people

Extremely clinically vulnerable people need to take extra action to prevent themselves from coming into contact with the virus, this is known as 'shielding'.

If you are part of this group, the NHS will have sent you or will send you, a letter and/or a text confirming this. The letter may be sent to your parent or guardian on your behalf. If you think you are part of this group but you haven't been contacted by the NHS, you should call your GP or hospital doctor for advice.

Once you receive a letter your clinician will be in touch to discuss what actions you should take depending on your individual circumstances. These may include:

1. Do not leave your house until 30 June 2020, at which point further guidance will be issued - this means staying at home at all times after getting your letter.
2. Do not meet up with people outside of your household, including friends and family that don't normally live with you, even if you are 2 metres apart (3 steps).
3. Strictly avoid contact with anyone who is showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.

Tell everyone that is not an essential supporter or carer that they cannot visit you. People from outside of your household must not come into your home, and you must not leave your home to meet them.

You should arrange for other people to bring you the things you need and leave them outside your door (remember, they should not come into your home and you should not leave home to meet them). To reduce the risk of exposure even more, wash your hands after handling the delivery.

You can ask friends or family to get your medication for you. If they cannot do this, you can contact your pharmacy and ask them to deliver it as many pharmacies are already doing this. Otherwise you can use the NHS App (<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-app/>).

If that is not possible, or you need support to get other things, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable and fill in your details for free support to be arranged for you.

How can people I live with support me to shield?

Families, supporters and carers also need to take precautions to help those most likely to get very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19). They should read the full 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 more information.

Most young people don't live alone. If you are shielding then the rest of your family or household do not have to start shielding themselves too, but they should do what they can to support you. This means carefully following guidance on social distancing (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>) and they should also try to:

1. minimise the time they spend in shared areas such as the kitchen, bathroom and sitting area, and avoid using the kitchen at the same time as you
2. keep 2 metres away from you
3. if possible, use a separate bathroom to you and always use different towels
4. clean spaces after every use, including the kitchen and bathroom, using regular cleaning products
5. regularly wash their hands and maintain good personal hygiene

Encourage the rest of your family or household to follow the advice as far as they are able.

Receiving care from other people

If other people help you with basic or personal care needs, like help with washing, dressing, going to the toilet or eating, this can carry on.

Paid carers can get more information about how they can protect you from the home care provision guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision>). Family and friend carers may also find this helpful, so they know what paid carers should be doing to protect you.

Nurses or doctors can also carry on visiting you. Anyone coming into your home should wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water, or hand sanitiser after entering.

But, if anyone who cares for you has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they must not visit you and should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>).

Make a plan about who will care for you if the people who usually do are not able to because, for example, they are unwell.

Talk to your parents and/or carers about this and if you're not sure who else would be able to care for you, contact your local council (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>) for advice.

Use the phone or internet to keep in touch with other people. Health and social services are all still open so ring if you need them.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact NHS 111 online. Do not go to hospital or your GP surgery, but if you need treatment, hospitals are still there to support and advise you. If there is an emergency, call 999. Explain that you are extremely vulnerable to coronavirus and are most likely to get very unwell.

If you have GP or other health appointments during the time that you are shielding, these may be rearranged to be over the phone. Your GP or practitioner will be in contact if this is the case.

Looking after your wellbeing whilst shielding

Make sure you look after your wellbeing for as long as you are advised to shield by doing things such as:

- spending time doing indoor activities that you enjoy
- looking for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the NHS website
- trying to eat healthy meals and drink enough water
- opening your windows to let in fresh air
- spending time in the garden or other private outdoor space (if you have that) to get some sunlight, keeping at least 2 metres away from your neighbours if you are sitting on your doorstep
- try spending time with the windows open to let in the fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight
- staying in contact with friends and family by text, phone or video call
- limiting your time reading the news or being on social media as this can make you feel more worried or anxious

Your mental wellbeing is an important part of adjusting to shielding

(<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#looking-after-your-mental-wellbeing>). It might make you feel worried or anxious if you are more likely to become very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19). It can be stressful to be away from your friends, change your normal routine and become less active. You may find shielding and social distancing boring or frustrating.

There are links to support you at this time especially for young people at Rise Above (<https://riseabove.org.uk/tag/mental-health/>) and Young Minds (<https://youngminds.org.uk/>).

Advice for young carers supporting someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable

If you're caring for someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk.

Ensure you follow advice on good hygiene, including:

- only providing essential care
- washing your hands frequently using soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitiser
- asking anyone coming into your home to wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water, or hand sanitizer after entering
- covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- putting used tissues in the bin immediately and washing your hands afterwards
- not visiting or providing care if you are unwell – make alternative arrangements for their care
- providing information on who they should call if they feel unwell and how to use NHS 111 online coronavirus (COVID-19) service (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>), and leaving the number for NHS 111 somewhere that is very easy to see
- finding out about different sources of support that could be used and accessing further advice on creating a back-up plan, which is available from Carers UK (<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>)
- looking after your own wellbeing and physical health during this time. There is more information and advice especially for young people at Rise Above (<https://riseabove.org.uk/tag/mental-health/>) and Young Minds (<https://youngminds.org.uk/>)