

# Summary of Guidance for Households with Possible Coronavirus Infection

***If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or high temperature and/or loss of taste or smell whilst in school, they must be sent home and to follow the guidance below:***

- If you live alone and have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, **stay at home for 7 days** from when your symptoms started. Do not go to work, school or public areas and do not use public transport or taxis. If possible, you should not go out even to buy food or other essentials and any exercise should be taken within your home.
- After 7 days, if you do not have a temperature, you do not need to continue to self-isolate. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. You do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough after 7 days, as a cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- If you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, (COVID-19), then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the 1<sup>st</sup> person in the house became ill.
- For anyone else in the household who starts *displaying* symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, *regardless* of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.
- Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.
- If you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period. If you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible.
- Reduce the spread of infection in your home: wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser; cover coughs and sneezes.
- If you have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms:
  - **Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital**
  - **You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home**
  - **Testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) is not needed if you're staying at home**
- If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition worsens, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then use the NHS 111 online (<https://111.nhs.uk>) coronavirus (COVID-19) service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
- If you develop new coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms at any point *after* ending your first period of isolation, (self or household), then you need to follow the same guidance on self-isolation again.

## **If you have a vulnerable person living with you**

- Minimise the time spent in shared spaces, e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, sitting areas and keep shared spaces well ventilated.

- Keep 2 metres apart and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible.
- If possible, they should use a different bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure they use separate towels for bathing/showering/hand hygiene.
- Do not spend time in the kitchen together. If they can, take their meals back to their room to eat. Use a dishwasher if you have one. The vulnerable person will need to use their own tea towel for drying their own utensils.
- Everyone should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.

## **Reduce the spread of infection in your home**

### **Wash your hands often**

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser.

### **Cover your coughs and sneezes**

- Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have one to hand, sneeze into the crook of your elbow and not into your hands.
- Dispose of tissues into a disposable rubbish bag immediately, wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser.

### **Cleaning and disposal of waste**

- Use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach; these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces e.g. door handles, handrails, remote controls and table tops.
- Clean a shared bathroom each time you use it, e.g. by wiping the surfaces you have touched.

### **Laundry**

- To reduce the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
- Do not share towels, including hand towels and tea towels.

### **Do not have visitors in your home**

- Do not invite or allow social visitors, e.g. friends or family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone or social media.

### **Face Masks**

- Face masks are not recommended as an effective means of preventing the spread of infection. Face masks play an important role in clinical settings, e.g. hospitals, but there is very little evidence of benefit from their use outside of these settings.

### **What you can do to help yourself get better**

- Drink plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated – your urine should be a pale, clear colour.
- You can use paracetamol to help with some of your symptoms.

### **Seeking medical advice**

- Seek prompt medical attention if your illness or the illness of any household members is getting worse. If it's not an emergency, contact NHS 111 online (<https://111.nhs.uk/>). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. In an emergency, dial 999 and inform the call handler that you or your relative has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.

## Looking after your wellbeing whilst at home

- Staying at home for lengthy periods can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people, and you or other household members may feel low. It can be worse if you don't have much space or a garden.
- Take care of your mind and body and get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are numerous sources of support and information that can help, e.g. Every Mind Matters website.
- Keep busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning, watching films.

## Ending self-isolation and household-isolation

**Self-isolation** – if you have had symptoms of coronavirus COVID-19, you may end your self-isolation after 7 days and return to your normal routine if you feel better and no longer have a high temperature. If a high temperature persists, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. After 7 days you do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough. A cough can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7 day period starts from the day when you first became ill.

**Household-isolation** – If living with others, all household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14 days begins from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. The incubation period for coronavirus COVID-19 is 14 days; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

Should a household member develop coronavirus COVID-19 symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period, e.g. 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 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; *it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household.*

*At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household-isolation.*

If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and has not sought medical advice, they should contact NHS 111 online (<https://111.nhs.uk>). If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

*Don't forget – the cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus COVID-19 infection having cleared. A persistent cough alone does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.*

*If you develop new coronavirus COVID-19 symptoms at any point after ending your first period of isolation (self or household), then you must follow the same guidance on self-isolation again. You will need to repeat staying at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started if you live alone. If you live in a household, you need to stay home for 7 days from when your symptoms started and all other household members need to stay home for 14 days. This will ensure the protection of others in the community by minimising the amount the infection is passed on.*