



Government Guidance on Social Distancing: Plain English Summary

The government has brought out guidance about social distancing.

This is to try and stop Covid 19 spreading.

The government particularly wants to try and stop people who are more vulnerable from catching Covid 19.

The government has said older people, people with long term health conditions and people with a learning disability should do social distancing.

This is because these people are likely to be more affected if they catch Covid 19.

Social distancing is different to social isolation.

Social distancing is steps you can take to reduce close contact you have with other people.

This will help reduce the chance of Coronavirus spreading.

The government advice says:

Avoid contact with someone who is showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

This means people who have a high temperature and/or a new and continuous cough

Don't use public transport unless you really have to.

If you do have to use public transport try to avoid rush hour if you can.

Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this.

Avoid large gatherings. This includes things like concerts and large sporting events.

Avoid gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs.

This includes avoiding gatherings with friends and family.

Keep in touch with family and friends using technology such as phone, internet, and social media instead.

Use the telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

The guidance says everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as they can sensibly do.

The guidance says those who are over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant, are **strongly advised** to follow the above measures as much as you can, and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible.

This advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.

The government will tell us when we can stop following this advice.

The full guidance can be read [HERE](#)

The guidance gives answers to some common questions people have.

How can I get assistance with foods and medicines if I am reducing my social contacts?

Answer:

Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services.

If you receive support from health and social care organisations, for example if you have care provided for you through the local authority or health care system, this will continue as normal.

If you are also a carer, there is more guidance to help you [HERE](#)

What should I do if I have hospital and GP appointments during this period?

Answer:

We advise everyone to get medical assistance remotely, wherever possible. This means by telephone or online.

If you have a scheduled hospital or other medical appointment, phone your GP or the person your appointment is with.

They will tell you whether to come to your appointment or whether they will give you another date.

What is the advice for visitors including those who are providing care for you?

Answer:

You should contact your regular social visitors such as friends and family to let them know that they should not visit you during this time, unless they are providing essential care for you.

Essential care includes things like help with washing, dressing, or preparing meals.

Instead stay in touch with family and friends by phone, online or through social media.

It is also a good idea to speak to your carers about what happens if one of them becomes unwell.

If you need help with care but you're not sure who to contact, or if you do not have family or friends who can help you, you can contact your local council who should be able to help you.

How do I look after my mental wellbeing?

Answer:

You may find that social distancing can be boring or frustrating.

You may find your mood and feelings are affected and you may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping and you might miss being outside with other people.

There are simple things you can do that may help, to stay mentally and physically active during this time such as:

Look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the NHS website [HERE](#)

Spend time doing things you enjoy – this might include reading, cooking, other indoor hobbies or listening to/watching favourite radio or TV programmes

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs

Keep your windows open to let in fresh air, get some natural sunlight if you can, or get outside into the garden.

You can also go for a walk outdoors if you stay more than 2 metres from others.

What is the advice for informal carers?

Answer:

If you are caring for someone who is vulnerable, these are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk of catching coronavirus.

Ensure you follow advice on good hygiene such as:

Wash your hands on arrival and often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.

Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.

Do not visit if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care.

Provide information on who they should call if they feel unwell, how to use NHS111 online coronavirus service and make sure the number for NHS 111 is by the phone.

Find out about different sources of support that could be used. This could be other family or friends. Or you might need to contact your local authority.

Look after your own well-being and physical health during this time.