



Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Updated August 2021


Who this guidance is for




This guidance is for all adults and children in England who are **most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus**.

This includes:

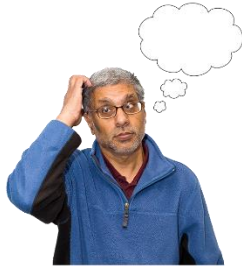
- people who were added to the Shielded Patient List by their GP or hospital doctor
- people who were added because their name came up as someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus through the [COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment](#)

	<p>If you are in this group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your doctor will have sent you a letter• you might have been told to 'shield' before <p>There is different guidance for people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus living in Scotland, living in Wales and living in Northern Ireland.</p>
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What has changed

	<p>On 1 April 2021, the advice about shielding was put on hold. This meant people who might get very poorly from coronavirus were told they did not need to shield anymore.</p> <p>If you need extra support and care to stay safe and well there is more advice below.</p> <p>The government have outlined a plan called a roadmap for how life can start getting back to normal.</p>
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Step 4



The roadmap is now on step 4. People who might get very poorly from coronavirus can follow the same guidance as everyone else on [how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#).





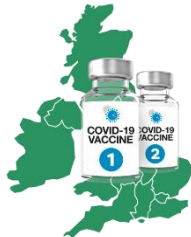

It is very important that everyone follows this guidance including people who might get very poorly from coronavirus.







As someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus you may want to think about extra things you still want to do to keep yourself safe.

Some people may choose to not spend much time with people they do not usually meet, especially if lots of people have coronavirus.

It is important to respect and think about the needs of people who want to be careful.

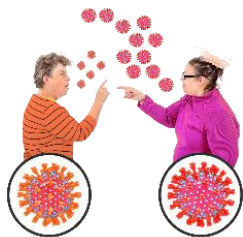
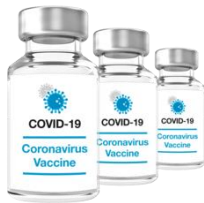
You might have concerns and want to know how you can carry on keeping yourself safe.

     	<p>There are things that you can keep doing to <u>lower the risk of getting poorly and stop the spread of coronavirus</u>, and there are some examples below.</p> <p>Most people in the country, including those who could get very poorly from coronavirus, will be well protected by the coronavirus vaccines (jabs), but no vaccine is 100% effective.</p> <p>Your immune system is what stops you getting poorly from things like viruses and germs.</p> <p>Scientists are just starting to find out that the jab might not work as well on some people whose immune system does not work very well.</p> <p>All coronavirus vaccines will protect you a bit, so it is very important that you have both of your jabs.</p> <p>Public Health England (PHE) checked on more than 1 million people who could get very poorly from coronavirus.</p>
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   	<p>PHE found that people whose immune system does not work well were much better protected when they had both coronavirus jabs.</p> <p>We are still doing lots of work to find out who is not as well protected by the vaccines.</p> <p>If you have any questions or concerns about coronavirus and your health condition, have a look at the NHS website.</p> <p>If you are worried about your mental or physical health or if you are worried because your immune system does not work very well, talk to your GP or hospital doctor.</p>
<h2>Vaccination (jab)</h2>	
 <div data-bbox="325 1666 528 1749" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f0ff;">NHS: Please call us to book a Covid-19 vaccine appointment</div> 	<p>Everyone on the Shielded Patient List should already have been asked if they want the coronavirus vaccines (jabs).</p> <p>If you have not had your first jab, please contact your GP, book your vaccination appointment online or call 119.</p>



This is the NHS calling to make a Covid-19 vaccine appointment



If you have had your first jab, make sure you have the second one as well. Having both jabs will mean you are even more protected.





If your immune system does not work very well, you may only be protected enough after you have had your second jab.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is a group of experts who advise the government about the vaccine.

At the moment [the JCVI's advice](#) is to offer booster vaccines (a third jab) to people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus, starting from September 2021.

The aim of the booster programme is to help to fight against new versions of coronavirus and to protect those most at risk of getting very poorly from coronavirus before winter.

A booster would be offered to groups in 2 stages. It would be best if people could have the booster at the same time as the flu jab.

<p data-bbox="328 286 523 367">Stage 1</p>     	<p data-bbox="772 322 1453 412">In the first stage a booster would be offered to:</p> <ul data-bbox="823 555 1453 1787" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="823 555 1453 707">• adults aged 16 years and over whose immune system doesn't work very well<li data-bbox="823 837 1453 927">• older adults living in residential care homes<li data-bbox="823 1061 1453 1151">• all adults aged 70 years or over<li data-bbox="823 1352 1453 1554">• adults aged 16 years and over who doctors think are most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus<li data-bbox="823 1688 1453 1778">• frontline health and social care workers
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Stage 2



In stage 2 a booster would be offered to:

- all adults aged 50 years and over
- adults aged 16 to 49 years who are in a flu or coronavirus at-risk group
- adults who live in the same house as someone whose immune system doesn't work very well

More details about the boosters will be available later, including information on:

- who will get the booster
- when they will get it
- what vaccine will be used



Most children under 16 are not likely to get very poorly or die from coronavirus, and so are not usually offered the vaccine.

However, the JCVI has advised that some groups of children should be offered the vaccine.

The vaccine will be offered to 12 to 15 year olds with the following health conditions:

- severe neuro-disabilities (disabilities that affect how the brain works with the body)
- Down's syndrome
- health conditions that reduce how well the immune system works
- children with profound and multiple learning disabilities, severe learning disabilities or who are on the learning disability register



The vaccine will also be offered to 12 to 17 year olds who are healthy, but who live with adults or children whose immune system doesn't work very well.

All 16 and 17 year olds who might get very poorly from coronavirus or have underlying health conditions should have already been offered a coronavirus vaccine.

The NHS will contact children to invite them to have a vaccination. If your child is in one of the groups but has not been offered a vaccine by the end of August 2021 to contact your GP.

No vaccine works 100%, so even if you have had 2 jabs there may still be a small chance of you catching coronavirus and getting ill.

This is why you should take the extra steps in this guidance to keep yourself safe.

Mixing with other people indoors and outdoors



Guidance on socialising inside and outside the home with friends and family has been updated for everyone.

Since 19 July 2021 there are no limits on how many people you can meet with. The guidance doesn't ask you to keep 2 metres away from others indoors or outdoors, except in some places.

If you might get very poorly if you catch coronavirus, or if you have not had both jabs, you should still think carefully about the risks of being close to other people.

The risk of catching coronavirus or giving it to someone is higher:

- in crowded spaces where there are more people who might have coronavirus



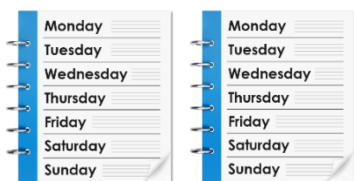
- in closed indoor spaces where there is not much fresh air
- when lots of people have coronavirus

Everyone will have to stay apart from others in some circumstances such as to stop germs spreading in health and care settings.

Staying apart from others has been very hard for people who might become very poorly from coronavirus.

This was especially hard when you were advised to shield.

You might still want to think carefully about things you can do to reduce the risk when you meet with other people you do not live with, because you are at higher risk of becoming very poorly from coronavirus.



For example, you could:

- meet outside if possible – the tiny droplets that contain coronavirus are quickly blown away which makes it less likely that someone will breathe them in
- if you meet inside make sure the space you meet in has lots of fresh air. Open windows and doors. There is more information in [COVID-19: ventilation of indoor spaces guidance](#)
- think about whether you and the people you are meeting have been vaccinated
- you might want to wait until 14 days after everyone's job before being in close contact with others
- wash your hands often
- try not to touch your face



- think about still staying 2 metres away from others if that feels right for you and your friends
- ask friends and family to take a quick coronavirus test (lateral flow test) before visiting
- ask visitors to your home to wear a face covering

If you can, exercise in the fresh air.

You can find advice on staying active and eating healthily at [NHS Better Health](#).

You can find more information online about [how to stop the spread of coronavirus](#).

Work



From 19 July 2021, if you have a job, you do not have to work from home anymore.



It is still the law that your boss must make sure your workplace is safe to work in.



Your boss should explain to you what they have done to make your workplace safe.



Some bosses are asking people to take regular tests to see if they have coronavirus.



The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has written [guidance about protecting people who might get very poorly from coronavirus](#).



This includes guidance on [how your boss should talk to you about making your workplace safe from coronavirus](#).



If you need help to work from home or at your workplace you might be able to get help from [Access to Work](#).

Access to Work have put people who might get very poorly from coronavirus at the top of the list for getting support and advice.

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) (furlough) is available until 30 September 2021.

You may still be able to go on furlough if your boss agrees. This means you can stop working, stay at home and keep your job.

The [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme \(SEISS\)](#) is also running until 30 September 2021 for people who work for themselves.

You might be able to claim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if you are ill or can't work because of coronavirus or other health reasons.



If you are worried about your health and safety at work talk to your workplace union, HSE or local council.

If bosses are not making workplaces safe from coronavirus, the HSE or the local council can give you advice, stop your boss from doing unsafe things, or take your boss to court.

Employment rights give you protection against discrimination or being sacked or treated badly at work.

There is [guidance for bosses and workers about being off work because of coronavirus](#).

The [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) (CAB) also has information about your rights at work and how to solve problems in the workplace.

If you are worried about work, you can also get advice from the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\) website](#) or by calling the Acas helpline on **0300 123 1100**.

School and college



It is important for children to go to school to learn, but also for their wellbeing and mental health.



Children who might get very poorly from coronavirus should be going into school or nursery.



Parents who are worried about their child going to school should speak to the child's school to find out what has been done to help make the school safe from coronavirus.






Parents should also ask what is being done to make sure their child can keep going to school.



Quick coronavirus tests (lateral flow tests) help to find people who have coronavirus but have no symptoms. This helps to stop the virus spreading.






To keep staff safe and to keep children, students and teachers in school the government has made [quick coronavirus tests available](#) to schools and colleges.



  	<p>Quick tests are also available for households of children who go to primary or secondary school and for households of primary and secondary school staff.</p> <p>This testing will help people who might get very poorly from coronavirus, and their families, to stay safe.</p> <p>All playgroups, nurseries, schools and colleges have <u>put things in place to help stop the spread of coronavirus.</u></p>
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Travel

 	<p>After 19 July 2021 it is no longer the law to wear a face covering.</p> <p>Even though it is not the law, the government still expects and recommends that people wear a face covering in crowded places such as on public transport.</p>
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  	<p>Wearing a face covering will still help to stop the spread of coronavirus, especially in crowded places when people get close to each other.</p> <p>It might also help people who would get very poorly if they caught coronavirus feel more relaxed.</p> <p>If you wear a face covering it is important that it fits properly and covers your mouth and your nose.</p>
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Shopping

 	<p>People who might get very poorly from coronavirus are advised to follow the same advice as the rest of the population. You might want to do your shopping or pick up medicines at quiet times during the day.</p> <p>Priority access to supermarket delivery slots stopped on 21 June 2021. You can still book deliveries from the supermarket, but you won't be first in the queue.</p>
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 <p>Here to support people who need help at this time</p> 	<p>The NHS Volunteer Responders programme is still available. Call 0808 196 3646 between 8am and 8pm, 7 days a week to ask for support or visit NHS Volunteer Responders for further information.</p> <p>There may also be other voluntary or community services in your local area that you can use for support.</p>
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Getting the help and support you need

    	<p>Health and care services are still there and are following guidance to help stop the spread of coronavirus.</p> <p>It is important you keep using the NHS for your health issues.</p> <p>There are also lots of health services you can get from home, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ordering the medicine you take regularly• talking to your doctor on the phone or online
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There is more information about [NHS help at home](#) available.

If you are reading this on your phone, you can [download the NHS app](#).

If you have an urgent medical need, phone **111**. For a medical emergency, dial **999**.

All the things you have been doing to keep safe from coronavirus may have made you feel worried, upset, or lonely.

It is normal to have lots of different feelings like this in time of change.

As life starts getting back to normal, you can see friends and family and do the activities that keep you well, you may find you start to feel better in yourself.



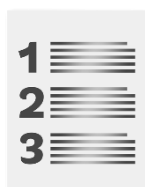
Mental health affects how you think feel and behave. The [Every Mind Matters website](#) has lots of information and advice to help you look after your mental health.

If you are feeling lonely the [Let's Talk Loneliness website](#) has lots of tips and advice.

The [NHS Volunteer Responders Check In and Chat Plus](#) service provides a regular check-in by telephone to you for up to 10 weeks. This usually means they will call you for a chat 3 times in a week.

If you are struggling with your mental health, you can reach out for support. Visit the [Hub of Hope](#) to find local sources of mental health support and services.

Your doctor will also be able to help you get support and treatment for depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder, or you can ask for support online.



If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis, you can call a local NHS mental health helpline for 24-hour advice and support or contact the Samaritans on 116 123 or by emailing jo@samaritans.org.

People who come to help with your own or your child's support needs, can still visit you.

They should still follow the [guidance about not spreading coronavirus](#) at all times.

You can also get extra help from your energy supplier. This is the company that supplies your gas or electricity.

There are rules that mean energy suppliers must keep a list of their customers who might be vulnerable.

If you have a health problem that means you might get very poorly from coronavirus, you can be added to the list.



A part of government called Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) are in charge of making sure the energy suppliers stick to the rules.

Find out [how to register and about other services your supplier can provide](#).

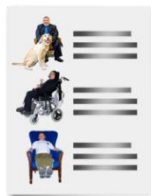
There are also rules that mean that phone and internet companies have to support their vulnerable customers.

A different part of government, called Ofcom, make sure that the phone and internet companies stick to the rules.

For more information, visit the [Office of Communications \(Ofcom\)](#) website.

If you are struggling because of coronavirus, please visit www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support or contact your local council to find out what help is available.



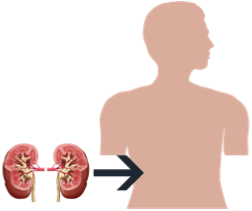
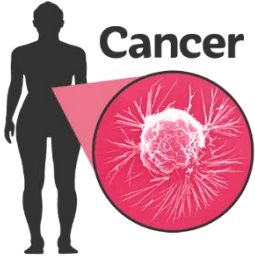

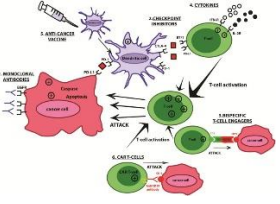
People most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus





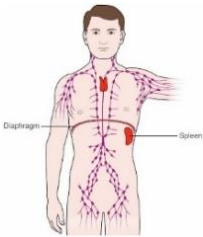




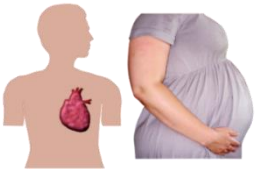


Some people are thought to be most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus. There are 3 ways of knowing if this applies to you:

- 1) you have one or more of the health problems on the list below
- 2) your hospital doctor or GP has added you to the Shielded Patient List because they think you will get very poorly if you catch the virus
- 3) your name has come up as someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus through the [COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment](#)

If you do not have any of the health problems on the list or you have not had a letter telling you that you are on the Shielded Patient List, follow the [guidance that applies to everyone.](#)

	<p>If you think that you should be added to the Shielded Patient List, talk about your worries with your GP or hospital doctor.</p>
   <p>Cancer</p>  	<p>People who have the following problems are thought most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus and are on the Shielded Patient list already:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People who have had transplants – like kidney or liver transplants. 2. People who are having treatments including chemotherapy and radiotherapy for some cancers. 3. People who are having any treatment for cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma, or myeloma. 4. People who are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatment for cancer.

    	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. People having other cancer treatments that can affect the immune system.6. People who have conditions to do with their lungs including all cystic fibrosis, very bad asthma, and very bad long-term lung disease, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).7. People who were born with rare diseases such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) that make the body, blood and cells work differently – which might mean they are more likely to get infections.8. People who are taking drugs that reduce the body's responses for fighting infections.9. People who have problems with their spleen such as having their spleen removed which means their body can't fight germs in their blood.
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    	<p>10. Adults with Down's syndrome.</p> <p>11. Adults on dialysis or with long term kidney disease (stage 5).</p> <p>12. Women who are pregnant and who have very bad heart disease.</p> <p>13. Other people who have been put on the list based on how experts think coronavirus might affect them.</p> <p>GPs and hospital doctors have been given guidance about why these decisions were made.</p>
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The pictures in this summary are from Photosymbols:
<https://www.photosymbols.com/> and <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/pregnancy-newborn-screening/newborn-metabolic-screening-programme-heel-prick-test>