

[New guidance sets out how to live safely with COVID-19](#)

As set out in the government's [Living with COVID-19 plan](#), the focus of this new phase is on protecting those who are most at risk from the virus.

A new set of guidance from UKHSA provides important public health advice for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as COVID-19; people with a positive COVID-19 test and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone. UKHSA has also published a set of public health principles for businesses, organisations and employers to consider in managing the risk to their workforce from respiratory infections, such as COVID-19.

Dame Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

As we learn to live with COVID, we encourage people to keep following simple steps to help keep themselves and others safe.

The pandemic is not over and how the virus will develop over time remains uncertain. COVID still poses a real risk to many of us, particularly with high case rates and hospitalisations. That is why it is sensible to wear a mask in crowded, enclosed spaces, keep indoor spaces ventilated and stay away from others if you have any symptoms of a respiratory illness.

Vaccination remains the best way to protect us all from severe disease and hospitalisation. If you have not yet come forward for your primary or booster I would urge you to do so straight away – the NHS vaccine programme is there to help and the sooner you are vaccinated the sooner you and your family and friends will be protected.

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection

UKHSA guidance sets out that people with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and who have a high temperature or do not feel well, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with others. Those who are asked – or choose to test – and get a positive COVID-19 result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days following the day of their positive result.

There is some evidence that children have a shorter duration of illness compared to adults. Children and young people who are asymptomatic, choose to take a COVID-19 test and receive a positive test result are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day of the test.

There will be some [symptomatic testing available](#) for certain high-risk groups

and settings, including for those who are at highest risk of becoming seriously unwell and who are eligible for COVID-19 monoclonal antibody and antiviral treatments.

The guidance states that it is particularly important that a person with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, avoids close contact with people whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness. If a person has tested positive for COVID-19 they should avoid those people who are at higher risk of serious illness for a 10-day period.

Anyone who needs to leave their home whilst they have symptoms of a respiratory infection such as COVID-19, or within 5 days following the day of their positive test, should take important precautions to minimise the chance of passing on their infection. Such precautions could include:

- wearing a well-fitting face covering or a face mask
- avoiding crowded or enclosed spaces such as public transport, large social gatherings and enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- exercising outdoors and away from others
- always remembering good hand and respiratory hygiene

Reducing the risks of spreading infection

Guidance also sets out actions for reducing the risks of spreading infection within the home, where someone has tested positive, or has symptoms of infection, and provides advice for those living in the home who will be close contacts. This is to help reduce the risk of them passing on infection.

For the wider population who don't have symptoms of COVID-19, or other respiratory infection or a positive COVID-19 test, UKHSA advises some important and sensible public health behaviours that can help to reduce the spread of infections and protect those around them. These include getting vaccinated, ventilating indoor spaces, wearing a face covering or mask in certain situations and keeping up good hand and respiratory hygiene – such as covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. Recent evidence on the [effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines against Omicron](#) and [wearing face coverings](#) has previously been published by UKHSA.

Updated UKHSA guidance is available online

[Guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19.](#)

[Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19.](#)

[Public health principles for reducing the spread of respiratory infections.](#)

including COVID-19, in the workplace.