

# Self-isolation removed for double jabbed close contacts from 16 August

- Instead of self-isolating, those who are double jabbed and under 18s identified as close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases are advised to get a free PCR test as soon as possible
- Protection from remarkable vaccine rollout allows more freedoms, with over three quarters of adults now double jabbed

From Monday 16 August, people who are double jabbed or aged under 18 will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. The change was announced last month, as part of step 4 of the Government's COVID-19 roadmap. With 75% of people having received both doses of the vaccine, the majority of adults will no longer need to self-isolate if they are contacts.

These changes can be made next week as a result of the remarkable success of the UK's vaccine programme, with over three quarters of UK adults now double jabbed. The latest data from Public Health England and Cambridge University shows that around 60,000 deaths, 22 million infections and 66,900 hospitalisations have been prevented by the vaccines.

As of Monday, double jabbed individuals and under 18s who are identified as close contacts by NHS Test and Trace will be advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible to check if they have the virus and for variants of concern. People can order a PCR home test online or by calling 119, or going to a test site.

As double jabbed people identified as close contacts are still at risk of being infected, people are advised to consider other precautions such as wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces, and limit contact with other people, especially with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable. They will not be required to self-isolate while they wait for the results of the PCR test.

Double vaccinated adults will no longer be required to self-isolate from Monday, as long as they received their final dose of an MHRA-approved vaccine in the UK vaccination programme at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case.

Anyone who tests positive following the PCR test will still be legally required to self-isolate, irrespective of their vaccination status or age in order to break onwards chains of transmission. Meanwhile anyone who develops COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and get a PCR test, and remain in isolation until the result comes back.

**Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:**

Asking the close contacts of people with COVID-19 to self-isolate

has played a critical role in helping us get this virus under control, and millions of people across the UK have made enormous sacrifices by doing this. Every single one of these sacrifices has helped us protect the NHS and save lives.

Getting two doses of a vaccine has tipped the odds in our favour and allowed us to safely reclaim our lost freedoms, and from Monday we can take another huge step back towards our normal lives by removing self-isolation requirements for double jabbed people who are contacts of people with COVID-19. Double jabbed people who test positive will still need to self-isolate.

Vaccines are what will bring this pandemic to an end – the wall of defence provided by the rollout is allowing us to get even closer to normal life. If you haven't already, please make sure you come forward for your jab at the earliest opportunity.

The vaccine previously allowed critical workers to leave self-isolation to ensure vital services continued. The changes introduced on 16 August will mean that, with some additional precautions for health and care settings, fully vaccinated contacts will routinely be able to attend work if they do not have symptoms.

Regular testing remains critical to controlling the virus as restrictions ease. Anyone with symptoms should take a PCR test to find out if they have the virus and to allow new variants to be detected. Alongside PCR testing for anyone with symptoms or who is a close contact, everyone in England is encouraged to take up the government's offer of free, twice weekly rapid testing to find additional cases among people who do not have symptoms.

**UK Health Security Agency Chief Executive (UKHSA), Dr Jenny Harries said:**

Thanks to the huge success of the vaccine programme, we are able to ease self-isolation requirements for double jabbed people and under 18s. It is important that close contacts continue to come forward for a PCR test, in order to detect the virus and variants of concern.

Although two doses of vaccine will greatly reduce your own risk of becoming unwell with Covid-19, it is still possible to contract the virus and pass it to others. So if you develop symptoms at any time – vaccinated or not – you should get a test and be very careful in your contact with others until you have received a negative test result

Removing self-isolation for under 18s comes ahead of thousands of pupils and students returning to school and college for the autumn term, and is crucial step to reduce disruption to education and keep children in the classroom.

In line with Step 4, 'bubbles' will end for all children under 18, social distancing will no longer be necessary, and schools will not need to stagger start and finish times. Two onsite tests should be taken by each secondary school and college student on return, followed by twice weekly testing at home. The Government will review testing requirements by the end of September.

## **Health and care workers**

From Monday, most double vaccinated health and social care staff who are close contacts of cases will be able to routinely return to work, provided they have had a negative PCR test. Daily LFD tests will need to be taken for 10 days as a precaution.

Staff working with clinically extremely vulnerable patients or service users will need a risk assessment to be carried out by a designated person in the workplace before they return to work.

## **Workplace daily contact testing scheme**

The Workplace Daily Contact Testing scheme will continue, with testing sites offering daily testing as an alternative to self-isolation for close contacts who are not double jabbed. Over 700 sites are now in operation across critical sectors, and over 1 million test kits have been distributed.

## **NHS COVID-19 app**

Updates will be made to the COVID-19 app to align with the changing requirements to self-isolation. App users identified as a close contact who confirm that they are double vaccinated or under 18 not need to self-isolate and will be given advice to book a PCR test.

If someone is called by NHS Test and Trace and told they are a contact, they will be asked their age and their vaccination status. If using the NHS COVID-19 app, people will be asked to self-declare if they are under 18 or double vaccinated.

## **Notes to editors**

- The following groups of people identified as close contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate. If their self-isolation period began before 16 August and was due to end after 16 August, they will be able to leave self-isolation on 16 August.
- Double vaccinated adults: those who received their final dose of an MHRA-approved vaccine in the UK vaccination programme, at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case
- Children and young people: those under the age of 18 years. Those turning 18 will be treated in the same way as children until the age of 18 years and 6 months, to allow them time to get vaccinated.
- Clinical trial participants: those who have taken part in – or are currently taking part in – an MHRA approved Covid-19 vaccine clinical trial. Those who received their final dose of an MHRA-approved vaccine

in the UK vaccination programme, at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case.

- Medical exemptions: those who can evidence that they cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.
- As with double vaccinated adults, children under 5 who are close contacts of a positive case will instead be advised to take a PCR test. If the PCR test is positive they will need to self-isolate, as any other positive case.
- Children who are aged under 5 years old who are identified as close contacts would only be advised to take a PCR test if the positive case is in their own household.