

**Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very ill from coronavirus  
(shielding)  
May 2020**

COVID-19 is a new illness. Lots of people call it coronavirus. It can affect your lungs and your breathing and make you feel unwell.

The signs of coronavirus are:

- high temperature
- a new cough where you keep on coughing. This means coughing a lot for more than an hour or more than two episodes of coughing in a day
- a change or loss of your sense of taste or smell

Some adults and children have other health conditions that means they are more likely to get very ill and have to go to hospital if they get coronavirus.

People who are most likely to get very ill from coronavirus need to do more than other people to try to stop themselves getting coronavirus. This is called 'shielding'.

This guidance is for all adults and children who are most likely to get very ill from coronavirus, wherever they live or usually spend their time.

This could be:

- in their own home
- in a care home
- at school
- in a special school

Families, supporters and carers also need to do more to help people most likely to get very ill from coronavirus. They should read the [full guidance](#) for more information.

People who are most likely to get very ill from coronavirus are those who:

1. have had transplants – like kidney or liver transplants
2. are having treatments for some cancers
3. have long-term lung disease

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4. were born with or have conditions that make the body, blood and cells work differently – which might mean they are more likely to get infections
5. are taking drugs that reduce the body's responses for fighting infections
6. are pregnant and have significant heart disease

If one or more of these applies to you, the NHS will send a letter.

It may take a few days for the letters from the NHS to get to people. If at least one of these six things applies to you, and you haven't had a letter after a few days, stay inside and contact your GP or hospital doctor. Tell them that you haven't had your "shielding" letter yet.

These are the things you must do if you get a letter saying you are most likely to get very ill (the letter might say extremely vulnerable).

Do not leave your house for 12 weeks from when you get your letter or call 0800 028 8327.

You should arrange for other people to bring you the things you need, like food, and leave them outside your door. If that is not possible, go to [www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable) to ask for help or call 0800 028 8327.

If it is not possible for others to help you to get food or medication, go to [www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable)

People who deliver things to you must not come inside your home and you must not leave your home to meet them. The person delivering should put your things on the doorstep and walk away after knocking/ringing your bell – do not step forward from your door to pick up the items until the other person is more than 2 metres away from you.

You can ask friends or family to get your medication for you. If they cannot do this, you can contact your pharmacy and ask them to deliver it. If that is not possible, go to [www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirusextremely-vulnerable) to ask for help or call 0800 028 8327.

If other people help you with things you can't do without (like help with washing, dressing, going to the toilet or eating), this can carry on as normal but these people may have to wear protective clothing (PPE) such as face

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masks, gloves and aprons. This may look strange and worrying but it is to help keep you safe.

Nurses or doctors can also carry on visiting you if they need to. But, if anyone who provides care for you has symptoms of coronavirus, they must stay away.

Make a plan about who will care for you if the people who usually do are not able to. Talk to your carers about this.

If you're not sure who else would be able to care for you, contact your local council for advice. Use the phone or internet to keep in touch with other people. This includes health and social services, if you need them.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus you should contact NHS 111 online or call NHS 111 straight away. In an emergency, contact 999. Let the emergency operator know that you are shielding from coronavirus.

If you have GP or other health appointments during the 12 weeks you are shielding, it is best that these happen by phone if possible. Contact your GP or health service for advice. Explain that you are shielding and unable to leave the house.

Make sure you look after your wellbeing while you are at home for 12 weeks. Spend time doing indoor things you enjoy. You can look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on our website [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk). Try to eat healthy meals and drink enough water. You should also think about opening your windows during the day to let in fresh air and if you have a garden to go outside into it and get some sunlight. If you don't have a garden, then try to sit by an open window at least once a day to get fresh air.

While you are staying inside for 12 weeks it may get lonely at times. Try to arrange calls (either on the phone or via video chat) with family and friends throughout the week so you feel like you are still talking to people. Use the internet if you can, to talk to others who are shielding, either through social media or email, this may help you feel less alone.

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