Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

# Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (shielding)

March 2020

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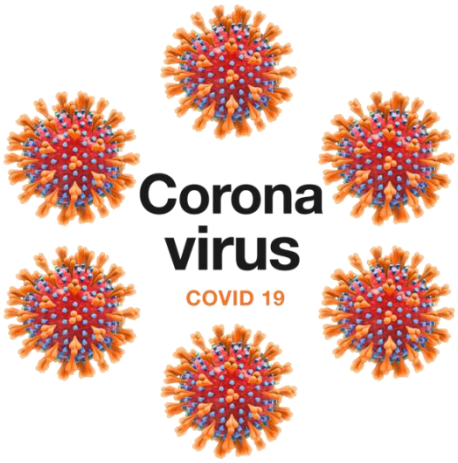
|  | COVID-19 is a new illness. Lots of people call it coronavirus.<br><br>It can affect your lungs and your breathing. |

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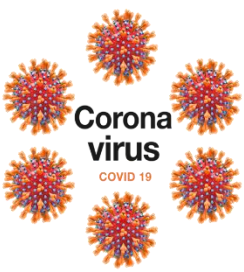
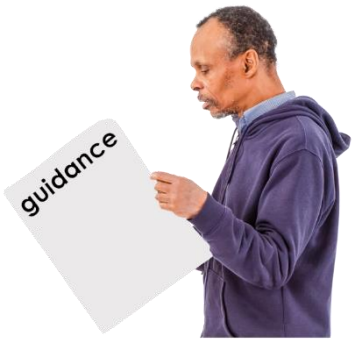
| | Symptoms of coronavirus are:<br>a. a high temperature and/or<br>b. a new cough where you keep on coughing. This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more episodes of coughing in a day. |
| | Some adults and children have a health condition that means they are **most likely to get very poorly** and have to go to hospital if they get coronavirus. |
| <br>  <br> | People who are **most likely to get very poorly** from coronavirus need to do more than other people to try to stop themselves getting coronavirus.<br><br>This is also known as ‘shielding’. |

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

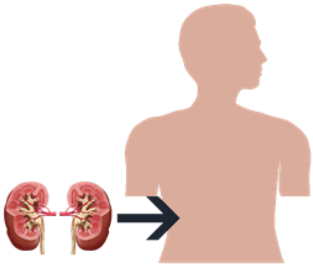
This could be:

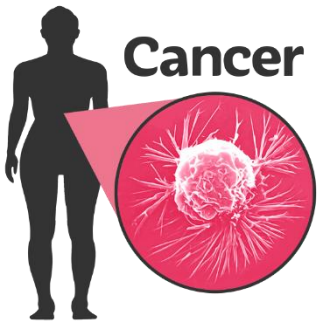
- in their own home
- in a care home
- at school
- in a special school

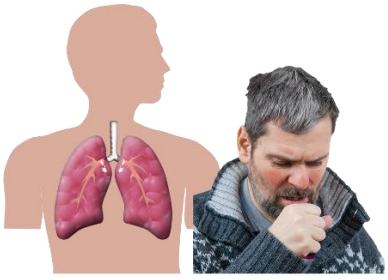



Families, supporters and carers also need to do more to help people **most likely to get very poorly** from coronavirus.

They should read the full guidance for more information.





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

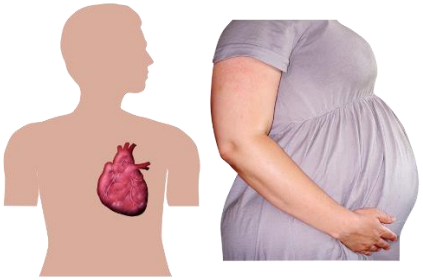
1. have had transplants – like kidney or liver transplants

2. are having treatments for some cancers

3. have long-term lung disease

4. were born with conditions that make the body, blood and cells work differently – which might mean you are more likely to get infections

5. taking drugs that reduce the body's responses for fighting infections



6. are pregnant with significant heart disease

The NHS will send a letter to you if you are **most likely to get very poorly** from coronavirus.

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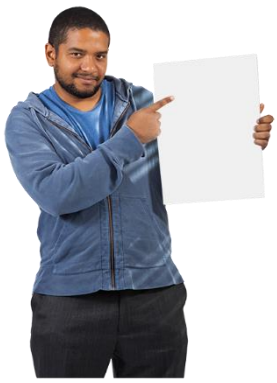
| | It may take a few days for the letters from the NHS to get to people. If you are someone who is **most likely to get very poorly** and you haven't had a letter after a few days, call your GP or hospital doctor for advice. |
| | It might make you feel worried or anxious if you are **most likely to get very poorly**.<br><br>The NHS is making plans to make sure you have the support you need. |
|  | These are the things you must do as soon as you get a letter saying you are **most likely to get very poorly** (the letter might say **extremely vulnerable**). |
| | Do not leave your house for 12 weeks from when you get your letter.<br><br>If it is not possible for others to help you to get food or medication, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or call 0800 028 8327. |

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| | You should arrange for other people to bring you the things you need, like food, and leave them outside your door.<br><br>If that is not possible, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable to ask for help or call 0800 028 8327.<br><br>People who deliver things to you must not come into your home and you must not leave your home to meet them. |
| | You can ask friends or family to get your medication for you.<br><br>If they cannot do this, you can contact your pharmacy and ask them to deliver it.<br><br>If that is not possible, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-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. |

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| <br> | Paid carers can get more information about how they can protect you from the home care provision guidance. Family and friend carers may also find this helpful.<br><br>Nurses or doctors can also carry on visiting you. |
| <br> | But, if anyone who cares 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.

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| <br> | If you have symptoms of coronavirus you should contact NHS 111 online or call NHS 111 **straight away.**<br><br>In an emergency, contact 999. |
| | If you have GP or other health appointments during the 12 weeks, it is best that these happen by phone if possible.<br><br>Contact your GP or health service for advice. Explain that you are **most likely to get very poorly** from coronavirus. |
| | Make sure you look after your wellbeing while you are at home for 12 weeks. |

✔ spend time doing indoor things you enjoy

✔ look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the NHS website

✔ try to eat healthy meals and drink enough water

✔ think about opening your windows to let in fresh air

✔ go outside into the garden, or get some sunlight

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