

Corona Virus – How to Help Safely

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

Full guidance on staying at home and away from others can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons, and one of these is to provide care or to help a vulnerable person. Even when you are doing this, you need to do so safely. You should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres (6 feet) apart from anyone outside of your household.

This guidance outlines how you can help and importantly, how to do this safely.

1. Can I help?

You can only provide support to people who are in isolation if you fulfil ALL of the conditions below:

- You are well and have no symptoms like a cough or high temperature and nobody in your household does
- You are under 70
- You are not pregnant
- You do not have any long-term health conditions that make you vulnerable to coronavirus.

2. Who can I help?

You can help households who are isolating. This could include friends and family members as well as your neighbours.

If you want to help in your local community, but don't know how, further information can be found in the details below.

Always remember, you should only provide support in person where it is essential for the health or care of a vulnerable person.

3. How can I help safely?

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection and save lives. This remains the case when you are helping others.

You should not go inside the homes of anyone you do not live with, especially vulnerable people or people who believe they may be infected and are isolating themselves. Breaking these rules could put you at risk of infection, or risk spreading it to others.

If you are picking things up for others, try to limit the amount of time you spend outside of your home by picking up essential items for them when you do your own shopping or collect their medicines during the same trip.

You should stay 2m or six feet away from anyone you do not live with at all times. Do not share a car journey with them.

You should also regularly wash your hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds.

If you have offered to help other people, please do not place yourself in positions where you may feel unsafe, for instance helping late at night.

You must also always adhere to our advice on how to stay safe.

If you or someone in your household has shown symptoms, or if you are more vulnerable to coronavirus yourself, then you must stay home. You still play an important role but will need to do this from home.

4. What can I do?

There are many ways you can help friends or family as well as neighbours who are in isolation.

4.1 Help with food shopping

If people staying at home because of coronavirus need basic necessities, you could do this yourself and leave the groceries on the person's doorstep. Try to limit the amount of time you spend outside of your home by picking up essential items for others only when you do your own shopping.

Or you could help those who aren't as familiar with online shopping by placing an order for them or by talking them through the process over the phone.

4.2 Collecting medication

You can pick up medicines on someone else's behalf. People should only request medication that they need, in their usual quantities. Remember to keep a safe distance when leaving any items on the person's doorstep or drop off area, and make sure that they have collected the medication before leaving.

4.3 Stay in touch over the phone or via social media

Staying at home for a long time can be a lonely experience and may impact on people's wellbeing. Just saying hello and regularly checking in over the phone or by video-chat is important, or you could help people by recommending information from organisations like Every Mind Matters.

4.4 Encourage people to stay mentally and physically active

People who have experienced staying at home have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning or watching films. Swap suggestions about how people you are supporting can keep themselves busy. If people are well enough, encourage them to do some light exercise and keep active around the home, perhaps by using an online exercise class.

4.5 Share trusted sources of information

It's easy to become worried by online information, some of which may be deliberately designed to mislead people. Help your community by sharing trusted information from the NHS, Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care.

5. What should I do if I'm worried about someone's health?

Encourage anyone you are in touch with or supporting to use the NHS 111 online Coronavirus service. They should only call 111 if they can't get online, their symptoms worsen, or they have been **instructed to. Call 999 if you believe someone's life is at risk.**

6. How to stay safe when accepting help from others

Please refer to guidance on staying at home.

If you are receiving voluntary help do not share financial details like credit/debit card numbers or personal information.

If someone you don't know calls at your home, always ask for ID and always ensure you are comfortable sharing details like your phone number or address. Only provide information on a need to know basis and if you have seen ID. Do not feel pressured into providing information. If you have doubts about those who are approaching you, and are concerned, it is advised that you don't engage, and report serious suspicious behaviour to the police.

Remember that genuine volunteers have been instructed not to enter your home.

7. Volunteering

Volunteering will be crucial in the response to coronavirus and people have not been stopped from doing this.

However, volunteering that requires going out of the house is now only permitted in certain circumstances. If you are well and are not at risk from coronavirus you can undertake essential activities including:

Delivering food

Helping people with their medical needs, such as picking up prescriptions

Providing essential care or to help a vulnerable person or person(s), including through essential public and voluntary services, such as food banks, homeless services, and blood donation sessions

Voluntary organisations are supporting people across the UK in this time of high need, providing practical, emotional and social support.

You can find local volunteering opportunities by visiting [Do-IT](#), [Volunteering Matters](#), or [Reach Volunteering](#).

You could approach your local volunteer centre or find your local member of the [National Association for Voluntary and Community Action](#).

Visit [Volunteering Wales](#) to find volunteering opportunities in Wales. Visit [Volunteer Scotland](#) to find volunteering opportunities in Scotland.

For more information on what sort of help is most needed and how to help safely please see the guidance above.