



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# Living safely with illnesses like COVID-19



**Easy read booklet  
June 2022**

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# Who we are and what we do



We are the **UK Health Security Agency**. We help to keep people safe from things that could be bad for their health like COVID-19 and flu.



Infections like COVID-19 and flu are an infection in your nose, mouth and lungs. It is very easy to catch and pass on these kind of infections.



There are things you can do to help keep healthy. We want people to live safely with COVID-19 and other infections like flu.



If you are ill, you may not have any symptoms like coughing or sneezing. But you can still pass the illness on to others.

# Ways you could catch COVID-19



You are more likely to catch or pass on COVID-19 if you are:

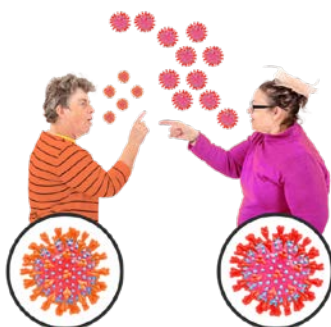
- close to someone else
- in a small space
- in a space without fresh air with other people



Someone who has an infection like COVID-19 can give it to someone else when they cough, breathe, speak or sneeze and another person breathes it in.



The virus can also be spread if someone with an infection touches something, and another person then touches that thing.



You do not always know if a person you meet will get very sick from COVID-19. We say these people are at **higher risk**.

These might be people you don't know, your friends or people you know at work.

# How to stop other people from getting COVID-19



You can do things that will help to reduce the chance of other people getting ill. You can

1. **Get vaccinated** with a vaccine that can help to stop you getting very ill



2. **Let fresh air in** if you meet other people indoors

3. **Keep things clean**

- ✓ wash your hands
- ✓ cover your mouth or nose when you cough or sneeze
- ✓ clean around you often



4. **Wear a face covering or face mask**



Stay at home and away from other people if you have symptoms of an infections like COVID-19 and you have a high temperature, feel very hot and feel unwell.

Read about [what to do if you feel unwell](#).

# Getting the COVID-19 vaccine



Vaccines are the best way to try and stop COVID-19 and other infections like flu.

They make it less likely that you will become very sick.



The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and work well.

You should get the COVID-19 vaccine if you can or if you are allowed to.



You should also get a booster if you are offered one. Having the booster means you get better vaccine protection.



You might be able to get other vaccines, especially if you are at high risk of getting very ill from infections.

Get vaccinated as soon as you can.

Read more about vaccines on the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk).



# Let fresh air in



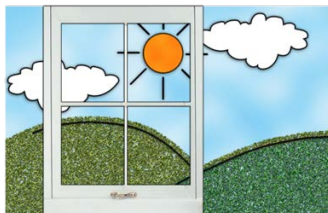
It is easier for people to get an infection like COVID-19 in a place that does not have lots of fresh air coming in from outside.

Viruses like COVID-19 can also stay in the air in a room after someone with the infection has left

Meet outdoors if you can.



Bringing fresh air into the house is very important if someone in your house is ill with an infection like COVID-19 or flu.



Letting more fresh air into a room means any viruses will be got rid of from the room more quickly.

Fresh air is very important if someone in your house is ill.

Bringing fresh air into your house is also good for your health and helps you sleep better.



Read more about [letting fresh air in.](#)

# Remember to have good hygiene



Keeping things clean can help stop the spread of infections like COVID-19 and flu.



Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.

Use a tissue you can throw away. Put it in the bin after you have used it.



Make sure you wash your hands straight away and use hand sanitiser.



If you do not have a tissue, you can cough or sneeze into your elbow. Do not use your hand.



# Wash your hands and use sanitiser



Infections can be caused by viruses and other germs.

Your hands can pick up germs from surfaces. If you then touch your face, you might be infected.



Washing your hands or using hand sanitiser means you are less likely to get ill.

Washing your hands with soap and water is best. Use hand sanitiser if you do not have soap and water.



You should wash your hands regularly during the day and:

- ✓ after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose
- ✓ before you eat or touch food
- ✓ after touching surfaces that lots of other people have touched like handrails or shared bathrooms
- ✓ when you get home from somewhere else



# Clean your surroundings



Surfaces in your home can get germs on them when people cough or sneeze.



Cleaning surfaces will help you to get rid of germs.



Clean surfaces more often if you touch them a lot. These are things like handles, light switches, and remote controls.



**GermDefence** is a website about ways to keep safe from germs at home.

[www.germdefence.org](http://www.germdefence.org)

# When to wear a face covering or mask



Wearing a face covering means less germs can come out of your mouth or nose and make others ill.

Face coverings can help stop you from getting germs from someone else.



Wear a face covering:

- ✓ when you are close to someone who is at high risk of getting ill
- ✓ when lots of people have COVID-19 or another infection like flu and you are close to other people
- ✓ when you are feeling unwell or have COVID-19



Children and young people will not normally need to wear a face covering at school or college.



Children under 3 years old should not wear a face covering.

# What makes a good face covering



Good face coverings:

- are made of 2 or 3 layers of material
- fit well around the nose and mouth
- have a wire over the nose to make them fit better. This can help to stop your glasses misting up



Scarves, bandanas or religious garments will not work as well as they do not fit well around the mouth and nose. They are only one layer of material.



You can use some face covering or masks again. You can wash them with your other clothes but make sure they do not get damaged.



If you cannot use a mask again, please throw it away properly.