

COVID-19: Gaining some clarity...



The University of Leicester Counselling and Wellbeing service are aware that as a community we face challenging times ahead whilst we are dealing with the developing COVID-19 situation.

In this unprecedented situation, it is understandable that you might be feeling anxious about what the future holds and worried about how to best safeguard your own and others' wellbeing.

However, when there is a lot of confusion and misinformation around the COVID-19 outbreak and how best to respond to it with guidelines regularly being updated, it can be helpful to have a clearer idea of the facts from reliable sources of information.

In this guide, we try to offer some clarification and guidance on the following topics:

- ***Self-isolation*** what does this mean?
- ***Social distancing*** what does this mean?
- When is it OK to help others?
- Who is in the ***increased risk category***?
- Wellbeing strategies (please also see Wellbeing UofL linked handout)

Social distancing –v- Self-isolation?

There is a lot of confusion about what social distancing and self-isolation mean because of our ever-developing understanding of COVID-19 and necessary adaptation to NHS and Government guidelines about responding to the virus.

Here, we clarify what these terms mean and provide links to accurate and up-to-date information regarding social distancing and self-isolation policies.



Self-isolation...What does this mean?

You'll need to stay at home (self-isolate) if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does. For the most up-to-date guidance on self-isolation, please follow the links below to the NHS and UK Government guidance pages on staying at home:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Staying at home means you should:

- not go to work, school or public areas
- not use public transport or taxis
- not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home
- not go out to buy food or collect medicine – order them by phone or online or ask someone else to drop them off at your home
- You can use your garden, if you have one. You can also leave the house to exercise – but stay at least 2 metres away from other people.

How long do I need to self-isolate for?

If you live alone and have symptoms of coronavirus, you'll need to stay at home for **7 days**. After 7 days:

- if you do not have a high temperature, you do not need to stay at home
- if you still have a high temperature, stay at home until your temperature returns to normal

You do not need to stay at home if you just have a cough after 7 days. A cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

If you live with someone who has symptoms, you'll need to stay at home for **14 days from the day their symptoms started**. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear.

If someone in your household develops symptoms of COVID-19, you should follow the following guidance:

- If more than 1 person at home has symptoms, stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person started having symptoms.
- If you get symptoms, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms start, even if it means you're at home for longer than 14 days.
- If you do not get symptoms, you can stop staying at home after 14 days.

What if I develop symptoms of COVID-19 and I'm living with someone vulnerable? 🧑🏻

If you live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to arrange for them to stay with friends or family for 14 days.

If you must stay at home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible and follow the guidance below.

😊 Do:

- try to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from each other
- avoid using shared spaces, such as kitchens or bathrooms, at the same time as each other
- open windows in shared spaces if you can
- clean a shared bathroom each time you use it, for example by wiping the surfaces you have touched
- use a dishwasher if you have one – if you do not have one, use washing-up liquid and warm water and dry everything thoroughly

Don't

- do not share a bed, if possible
- do not share towels, including hand towels and tea towels

How can I reduce the risk of spreading infection?

While you're staying at home, you should:

- wash your hands with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- clean objects and surfaces you touch often (like door handles, kettles and phones) using your regular cleaning products

How to do your cleaning and laundry:

- use your usual household products, such as detergents and bleach, when you clean your home.
- put used tissues and disposable cleaning cloths in rubbish bags. Then put the bag into a second bag and tie it securely. Wait 3 days before putting it in your outside bin.
- dispose of other household waste as normal.
- wash your laundry in the washing machine in the usual way. Laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- do not shake dirty laundry, as this may spread the virus in the air.
- if you do not have a washing machine, wait for 3 days after your stay at home has ended before taking your laundry to a launderette.

You can also reduce the risk of spreading infection through practicing social distancing.



Social Distancing...what does this mean?

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) and protect individuals at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19.

Who needs to practice social distancing?

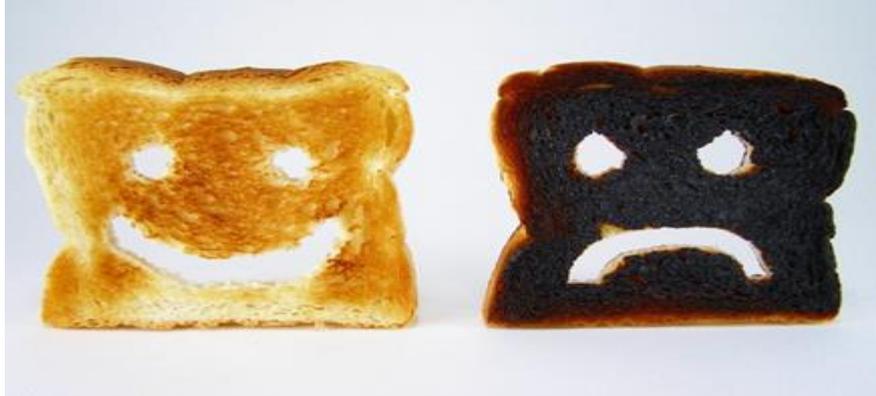
We should all be taking social distancing measures to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

How can I practice social Distancing?

- **Avoid:** group gatherings, visits to bars and restaurants, sleep overs, playdates, visiting the elderly with children, crowded retail stores, gyms, visitors to the home, non-essential workers in the home
- **Use Caution:** limit visits to places other than supermarkets, pharmacies, checking on friends and family safely (only do this if you're well enough to do so without posing a risk to their health), limit travel and use of public transport to essential use and trying to avoid travel at peak times
- **Maintain awareness:** The government guidelines around social distancing and what this involves are changing rapidly in response to the developing COVID-19 outbreak, making it vital to stay up to date with government advice which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- **Do:** engage in physical exercise, go for a jog, practice gentle exercise at home using You tube videos, or go for a walk when it is quiet whilst maintaining social distance, keeping busy working or studying from home, complete DIY in and around the home, read, engage in hobbies,

spend time in the garden, go for a drive, stay connected with friends and family by making video calls and phone calls

When is it OK to help others?



You can offer practical support such as running errands, including getting shopping, picking up prescriptions or walking pets for those who are vulnerable to COVID-19 or individuals who are self-isolating if:

- You are not experiencing symptoms of coronavirus,
- You haven't been in close contact with anyone showing symptoms of Coronavirus
- You are not a member of an at-risk group highlighted above
- You do not have someone living in the same house as you who is included in the at-risk groups highlighted above

Although helping vulnerable neighbours, friends & family is kind, be mindful of when you are feeling rundown or emotionally or mentally drained as this may be the time to step back and focus on your own wellbeing (see below).

If you are not feeling physically and mentally well enough to offer support – remember that self-care is not being selfish! You cannot effectively support others if you are not looking after your own wellbeing.

If you are not able to offer practical support to those around you, making contact through messages, phone calls or video calling can be a positive way of keeping in touch. It is also helpful to boost morale through swapping suggestions of things to watch, listen to or read, sending motivational quotes, and sharing wellbeing strategies that you find helpful.

Individuals who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are advised to follow social distancing measures particularly stringently.

Who is in the increased risk category?

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds:

chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis, chronic heart disease, such as heart failure, chronic kidney disease, chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis, chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy and diabetes

- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

Please note: there are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If you are in this category, the NHS in England will directly contact you with advice about the more stringent measures you should take in order to keep yourself and others safe.

For now, you should rigorously follow the social distancing advice in full, outlined above.

People falling into this group are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:

- people who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- people with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- people with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

To find out further details and updates on the Governments' social distancing policies, please access:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>



Please see some suggested wellbeing strategies below. Please also take some time to reflect on what creative strategies you can practice from home and share with others when you're staying at home and morale is low.

- **Baking: here are some good recipes for cupcakes and doughnuts**
[https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/cupcakes;](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/cupcakes)
<https://glutenfreecupatea.co.uk/2020/03/16/gluten-free-creme-egg-baked-doughnuts-recipe/>
- **Yoga: here are some helpful yoga videos**
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PC1i5SdQ1YM;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PC1i5SdQ1YM)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VieEEcgzfqk>
- **Watching entertaining You tube videos**
- **Compiling a positivity playlist of music to listen and have a dance to**