

## Get tested and self-isolate if required

If you have symptoms or test positive

If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test](#), even if your symptoms are mild. This is because many people experience mild symptoms from COVID-19, but may still pass on the virus to others.

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

You should self-isolate at home while you [get a PCR test](#) and wait for the results. You must self-isolate if you test positive. You must self-isolate from the day your symptoms started and the next 10 full days, or from the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms and the next 10 full days. This is the law, regardless of whether you have been vaccinated. Self-isolating is important because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you do not have symptoms. You must stay at home for the full amount of time you are told to, because this is the period when the virus is most likely to be passed on to others.

If you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace

You must also self-isolate if you are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace. Find out:

- [what you should do if you live in the same household as someone who has tested positive](#)
- [what you should do if you've come into contact with someone outside your household who has tested positive](#)

## Guidance on self-isolating

When self-isolating, follow the:

- [stay-at-home guidance for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [stay-at-home guidance for non-household contacts of people with confirmed COVID-19](#)

This will help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to other members of your household and community. In both cases you must stay at home at all times and not have contact with other people. There are only very limited circumstances when you do not have to do this, such as seeking medical assistance. If you do leave your home during your period of self-isolation for a permitted reason, you should maintain social distancing, keep 2 metres apart from other people, and wear a face covering where possible.

You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate, or you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate. You should [visit your local authority website](#) for information on Test and Trace Support Payments and other practical support offered in your area including help accessing food. If you require prescription medication there is a medicine delivery service available through pharmacies and dispensing GPs.

You could be fined if you do not self-isolate after being told to by NHS Test and Trace.

## Self-isolation exemptions

You're [not required to self-isolate](#) if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- you're fully vaccinated
- you're below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- you've taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

[NHS Test and Trace will contact you](#) to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you're not legally required to self-isolate, you will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, you will be advised to [get a PCR test](#) as soon as possible.

You should not arrange to have a PCR test if you have previously received a positive PCR test result in the last 90 days, unless you develop any new symptoms of COVID-19, as it is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.

You can find further [guidance for household contacts](#) and [guidance for non-household contacts](#) of people with confirmed COVID-19 infections.