

Shielding & Protecting People Extremely Vulnerable To COVID-19

This guidance is for people, including children, who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) because of an underlying health condition, and for their family, friends and carers. It is for those situations where the vulnerable person is living in their own home, with or without additional support

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. The Government are strongly advising people with serious underlying health conditions (listed below), which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe.

Which people are extremely vulnerable?

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

The NHS will be directly contacting people with these conditions to provide further advice.

What you need to know

If you have an underlying health condition listed above, you are at very high risk of severe illness as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) requiring admission to hospital.

Shielding is a practice used to protect extremely vulnerable people from coming into contact with coronavirus.

You are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks from the day you receive your letter. Please note that this period of time could change.

If you think you have developed symptoms of COVID-19 such as a new, continuous cough or fever, seek clinical advice using the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus service or call NHS 111. Do this as soon as you get symptoms.

If you have someone else living with you, they are not required to adopt these protective shielding measures for themselves. They should do what they can to support you in shielding and they should stringently follow guidance on social distancing, reducing their contact outside the home

What your employer needs to know

- Employees will need their support to adhere to the recommendation to stay at home to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) to others
- Those who follow advice to stay at home will be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) from the first day of their absence from work
- Employers should use their discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients
- If evidence is required by an employer, those with symptoms of coronavirus can get an isolation note from [NHS 111 online](#), and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the [NHS website](#)
- Employees from defined [vulnerable groups](#) should be strongly advised and supported to stay at home and work