

Staying safe outside your home

Updated 24 June 2020

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>

It is your responsibility to adopt these principles wherever possible. None of these principles can completely remove the risk of catching coronavirus on their own. You need to use them all wherever and whenever appropriate.

1. Keep your distance from people outside your household

Whilst recognising this will not always be possible, it is important to be aware that the risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them. Therefore, you are unlikely to be infected if you walk past another person in the street.

The government recommends that you keep two metres away from people as a precaution or one metre when you can mitigate the risk by taking other precautions in this list.

2. Avoid being face-to-face with people if they are outside your household or support bubble

You are at higher risk of being directly exposed to respiratory droplets (released by talking or coughing) when you are within two metres of someone and have face-to-face contact with them. You can lower the risk of infection if you stay side-to-side rather than facing someone. The key thing is not to be too close to people outside your household or support bubble. If you must, keep it as brief as possible.

3. Keep your hands and face as clean as possible

Wash your hands often using soap and water, and dry them thoroughly.

Where available, use sanitiser outside your home, especially as you enter a building and after you have had contact with surfaces. Avoid touching your face.

4. Keep indoor places well ventilated

Evidence suggests that the virus is less likely to be passed on outdoors and in well-ventilated buildings.

In good weather, try to leave windows and doors open in areas where people from different households come into contact, or move activity outdoors if you can.

Use external extractor fans to keep spaces well ventilated and make sure that ventilation systems are set to maximise the air flow rate.

Heating and cooling systems can be used at their normal temperature settings.

5. Avoid crowded spaces

You can lower the risks of transmission by reducing the number of people you come into close contact with. For example, avoid peak travel times on public transport, where possible and avoid densely crowded areas. Small groups in small spaces pose a risk as well as large, close crowds.

Businesses should also take reasonable steps to avoid people being gathered together. For example, by reducing density in meeting rooms and social spaces, allowing the use of more entrances and exits, and staggering entrance and exit points and work shifts, where possible.

6. Work from home if you can

If you can do your job from home you should continue to do so, but you and your employer should discuss and agree working arrangements to best suit the needs of the business.

7. If you have to travel (for example, to work or school), think about how and when you travel

To reduce demand on the public transport network, you should walk or cycle wherever possible. If you have to use public transport, you should try to avoid peak times.

Employers should consider staggering working hours, expanding bicycle storage facilities, providing changing facilities and providing car parking.

8. Face coverings

You must wear a face covering at all times on public transport or when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient. Hospitals will be able to provide a face covering in emergencies. If you can, you should also wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas. You should be prepared to remove your face covering if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification.

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with.

Face coverings do not replace social distancing. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, and/or high temperature, and/or loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste -

anosmia), you and your household must isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this. You should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if you have COVID-19.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings, like those exposed to dust hazards.

Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly.

It is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

You can [make face-coverings at home](#). The key thing is it should cover the mouth and nose.

9. Avoid shouting or singing close to people outside your household or support bubble

There is some evidence to suggest that shouting and singing increase the amount of respiratory droplets and aerosols people release and therefore the risk of transmission between people if they are doing either in close proximity to those outside their household. You should avoid doing either with people outside your household or social bubble.

10. Reduce the number of people you spend time with in a work setting

You can lower the risks of transmission in the workplace by reducing the number of people you come into contact with regularly, where you can. Your employer can support with this (where practical) by:

- changing shift patterns and rotas to match you with the same team each time
- splitting people into smaller, contained teams

11. Wash your clothes regularly

There is some evidence that the virus can stay on fabrics for a few days, although usually it is shorter. Therefore, if you are working with people outside your household, wash your clothes regularly. Changing clothes in workplaces should only be considered where there is a high risk of infection or there are highly vulnerable people, such as in a care home. If you need to change your clothes, avoid crowding into a changing room.

12. When at work or in business or public premises, follow the advice on site

Employers, business owners and organisations have a duty to assess and manage risks to your safety in the workplace and on their premises. The government has issued guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus. This includes guidance on how to make adjustments to help you maintain social distancing.

It also includes guidance on hygiene, as evidence suggests that the virus can exist for up to 72 hours on surfaces. Therefore, frequent cleaning is particularly important for communal surfaces like:

- door handles
- lift buttons
- communal areas like bathrooms
- kitchens
- tea points

You can see the [guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus](#) on gov.uk and can ask your employer if you have questions.