

# Keeping Safe at home during the Pandemic 2020

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# Important Message

A serious virus is spreading in our community and around the world. It is called COVID-19. The symptoms include cough, fever, fatigue and difficulty breathing.

We must do all we can to prevent the spread of this virus. The government says we must:

- Stay at home
- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home).
- If you go out, stay 2 metres, (6ft) away from other people at all times.
- Wash your hands for - 20 seconds - thoroughly and often.

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus that has been spreading around the globe. This virus is called the Coronavirus or, more specifically, COVID-19. The virus has spread to many people, in all parts of the world, and is therefore referred to as a pandemic.

In today's world, many people travel, making it easier for a virus to spread to communities large and small. Since this virus is now spreading, and affecting more and more people, governments around the world have been taking advice from world health

leaders and establishing action plans to help stop the virus from spreading.

## How does the virus spread?

The World Health Organization says that COVID-19:

“can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.”

“These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.”

Here in the UK, our government has been providing an update on television every day at about 5pm, providing details about what the Government is doing to help stop the spread of the virus and what our government plans to do to help the people of the UK.

## What we all need to do.

The most important message from our Prime Minister's office is that everyone must stay at home, unless, of course they are required to work. Only people who are key workers are allowed to work. Everyone else is asked to stay at home. This means that all people – all families – have been told to stay at home until health experts say it is safe to be with others.

There are many new rules in place across the whole of the UK. These rules will continue to be in place until the health experts advise us it is okay to once again gather together.

Most shops have closed, both in the UK and in other countries. Only essential shops are open. Grocery shops and pharmacies are open, because we all need food and many need medications.

Everyone is having to adopt new daily routines. Schools, parks, and all places where the public can gather have been closed. No sport or team games are being played. If you have tried to watch your favourite



sport on television, you will know that there are no current games on TV.

The government officials have told us to leave the house **ONLY** for very limited purposes. This includes:

- . shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- . one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - with members of your household
- . any medical need, including to donate blood, to avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide to help a vulnerable person (but be sure to follow public health rules)

- . travelling for work purposes, but only when you cannot work from home

These new rules have been put in place to keep people away from each other. Staying away from people is called social or physical distancing. This rule will reduce the spread of the virus. Health experts recommend that people stay at least 2 metres (just over 6 feet) away from each other, to ensure they do not share their germs.

The biggest challenge is that people may not know they have the virus, because it can take up to 14 days before they have the symptoms. So, everyone is being asked to stay at a distance, to make sure we keep everyone as safe as possible.

Families and friends are asked not to visit each other. They are asked use their phone or new technology such as a computer, mobile phone or tablet, such as an iPad. This new technology will allow people to see each other on the screen as they talk to each other.

Another way to stay in touch is to send a letter and send it on email or ask someone to write a letter to you. While talking on the phone or receiving a letter isn't same as being together, it is what everyone – young and old – must do right now.

Health and social care workers are the among the greatest heroes during these difficult days. They are doing their best to care for everyone who needs care and support. We also need to recognize that everyone who is working in hospitals, home care or care homes, and helping to keep things running, also need to be recognized and thanked. For example, the cleaning staff, catering

staff and maintenance staff are all playing their part.

As a society we need to say a great big – sincere – thank you to all these brave – and exhausted - people.

We also need to thank those who continue to make sure we have food, medicines, and essential services such as gas, electricity and water, in our community.

If a person is admitted to hospital, because of COVID-19, they will see staff wearing protective clothing to ensure the virus does not pass from one person to another. Everyone has to be very careful.

You may find that if you have carers coming to help you in your home, they will wear protective clothing. This special protection is used to keep everyone – including you – as safe as possible.

We all need to do our part to wash away and kill the germs that could be carried on our hands. During this time of heightened precaution, it is important for **EVERYONE** to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap - often. You should also use hand sanitizer – especially if you have been out. The government suggests we sing “Happy Birthday” twice, while washing our hands, to help us know how long 20 seconds is!

Infection control experts also say that social gestures such as shaking hands and hugging must stop during this time. Since we are firmly being told to avoid shaking hands, we need to find other ways to let people know that we care. So, smile brightly or wave from afar and let everyone know you are happy to see them. No one knows how long these new rules will be in place. Let's all work together to keep our distance and do our part to stop the virus from spreading.

Stay at home  
Stay Safe  
Keep well

