

Keeping safe at home during the pandemic in England

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This book is part of the UK Dementia Care Book Club series. The style, content and layout of this book has been inspired by the books written in the series “Carry on Reading in Dementia” by Gail Elliot, Gerontologist and Dementia Specialist, DementiAbility, Canada.

An important feature of the book is the size, type font and layout of the material, which has been tested in individual and group settings by people living with dementia.

The purpose of this book is to enable people living with dementia to read and learn about COVID-19, according to what is known at the time of writing this document. It includes details about what we are all being advised to do to stop the spread of the virus (according to local, regional, national and international health experts and politicians). It is not intended to provide advice – and may not include the most up-to-date information, as the details are constantly changing.

To keep abreast of current details, please refer to government website and other reputable websites that contain updated information.

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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, but are not limited to, a cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing.

We must do all we can to prevent the spread of this virus and follow government guidance.

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds thoroughly and often, or use hand sanitiser.
- Wear a face covering in shops and other indoor buildings.
- If you go out, stay 6 feet away from other people at all times, if possible.
- Follow the local rules in your area.

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.”

The pandemic began in the UK in March 2020, and for many weeks no one could leave home. As the virus got under control, rules were relaxed and the country began to come out of being in “lockdown”.

Sadly, as the autumn and winter has arrived, the virus is coming back and new restrictions are being put in place to try and keep everyone safe.

This has been a difficult time for everyone.

What we all need to do

There are different rules across the UK and across different regions of England, depending on how high the spread of the virus is.

In England there are three levels of alert: Medium, High and Very high.

The level of alert has different restrictions and actions people and businesses must take.

It is important to follow the local rules where we live to reduce the spread of the virus and to keep safe.

Everyone is having to adopt new daily routines. Pubs and restaurants are open in some parts of England but must follow the rules which are decided by the level of risk in the area.

In some places they must close at 10pm, while in the highest risk areas, pubs must remain closed.

Cinemas are open but theatres and open air music festivals are not allowed to happen.

School children and university students have been allowed back to study. The schools, colleges and universities were closed for 5 months and everyone had to have their education at home using the internet.

Team sports have started to be played after many months. Most do not have spectators. The government has allowed a few sporting events to let a few spectators in, but the atmosphere is very different!

The Grand National, the Boat Race and Wimbledon were all cancelled! Even the 2020 Olympic Games has been postponed until 2021.

Seeing family and friends is also affected, and we cannot gather in groups larger than 6 people. In high and very high risk areas, meeting people from outside your own household cannot happen at all.

Breaking the family and friends gathering rules is against the law and people will be fined by the police if it happens.

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.

There are many symptoms including a cough, fever, difficulty breathing or a loss of taste and smell.

Some older people have other symptoms such as feeling generally unwell, stomach problems or becoming more confused.

Some people do not have any symptoms or just feel a little “under the weather”.

There is evidence that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups are at a higher risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19) and are also at higher risk of becoming seriously ill and sadly, more people from these communities are dying. This includes many health and care workers who work in hospitals and care homes.

The community is doing all it can to prevent the spread of the virus. Some everyday parts of life might be changed. This could be a change to faith ceremonies, some clubs and social events are cancelled, and friends and family cannot visit in the same way.

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.

What can you do to protect yourself?

It is important to follow the guidance in the area where you live and keep yourself as fit and healthy as possible.

- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser.
- Try and sit 6 feet away for people outside your household.
- Wear a face covering when you go into buildings or on public transport.
- Look after medical conditions you have.

Other things you can do to help yourself are:

- Eat healthily and drink plenty of fluids.
- Go outside into the fresh air everyday.
- Keep as physically active as you can.
- Keep busy with activities and “jobs” at home.
- Stay at home if you are feeling unwell.
- Do not hug or kiss anyone other than the person you live with!
- Have a Coronavirus (COVID 19) test if you have symptoms.
- Watch something on the TV, listen to music or read a book that makes you feel happy, and find things to laugh about !

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.

Wash your hands

Wear a face covering

Allow plenty of space

Stay safe and keep well