

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.

- Stay at home and only go out for exercise or essential shopping.
- 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.

In England we stay at home and only go out if we really need to. The whole of England is now in lockdown.

This is a difficult time for everyone.

What we all need to do

In November, the government have brought in a “lockdown” in England. This means everyone must stay at home unless they are going to work, doing essential shopping, having medical care or taking exercise.

All hotels, pubs, restaurants and cinemas must close, along with hairdressers and beauty parlours.

All non-essential shops must close. The only shops that can stay open are to sell essential things like food, medicines and household goods.

There are different rules across the four countries of the UK. Before the Lockdown, there were different rules in different parts of England depending on how high the spread of the virus was.

The government hope that we can go back to these rules in December so that life can be a little easier.

The government wants to slow the spread of the virus to protect the NHS, so that it can care for us if we need their services.

It is important to follow the rules to reduce the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

Team sports have started to be played after many months, but most did not have spectators. The government started to allow a few sporting events to let a few spectators in, but the atmosphere is very different and this has stopped because of lockdown.

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

Now we are in lockdown, everyone is having to adopt new daily routines.

Seeing family and friends is also affected. People cannot meet each other in a café, pub or in their house or even their garden. But we can meet one other person in a public park or public outdoor space.

Now that it is mid-winter that will mean wrapping up warm and taking a thermos flask!

If a person lives on their own, they can meet another person in their house, and stay with them. This is referred to as “household bubble”.

Breaking the gathering rules is against the law and people can be fined if this 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.

Everyone must do all we can to prevent the spread of the virus. Some everyday parts of life will be changed. This could be a change to faith ceremonies, clubs and social events are cancelled, and friends and family cannot visit.

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.

- Stay at home and only go out for exercise or essential shopping.
- 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

Keep well