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Coronavirus (COVID-19): Latest information and advice.



Contents

Don't become another statistic!..... 1
Introduction – Recent changes..... 2
New variant of Coronavirus..... 2
Christmas Arrangements..... 2
Self-isolation and Christmas bubbles 3
After meeting your Christmas bubble 3
Symptoms and behaviours 3
Tier 2 – High Alert levels..... 4
Tier 3 – Very High Alert Levels..... 4
Flu vaccine 4
When returning to work..... 5
Counselling and Bullying..... 5

Don't become another statistic!

The opening up of some restrictions over Christmas for a few days will obviously be nice for us to be able to see family and friends that we may not have seen for some time. This will, undoubtedly increase the risk of catching the virus by large numbers of people coming together, whilst the virus is still circulating in society. Control over Christmas is in the hands of us all, as individuals and families, make sure that when meeting people you exercise caution and implement the controls that we have all become used to over recent months. Regularly washing hands, wearing face coverings and keeping a safe distance. Don't think you won't catch the virus it is very contagious. It is our responsibility to control the virus. Protect yourself, protect your loved ones and protect your colleagues.

Introduction – Recent changes

Self-isolation is essential to reducing the spread of COVID as it breaks the chains of transmission. After reviewing the evidence, the Government are now confident that we can reduce the number of days that contacts **self-isolate from 14 days to 10 days. This is effective from Monday 14th December 2020.**

People who return from countries which are not on the travel corridor list should also self-isolate for 10 days instead of 14 days.

People who test positive should continue to self-isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms or 10 days from point of taking a positive test if asymptomatic.

New variant of Coronavirus

A new variant of coronavirus has been found which is growing faster in some parts of England. At least 60 different local authorities have recorded Covid infections caused by the new variant. Over the last week, there had been sharp, exponential rises in coronavirus infections across London, Kent, parts of Essex and Hertfordshire. Currently over 1,000 cases have been identified with this variant predominantly in the South of England.

Christmas Arrangements

Making a Christmas bubble with friends and family

Between 23rd and 27th December:

- you can form an exclusive 'Christmas bubble' composed of people from no more than three households
- you can only be in one Christmas bubble
- you cannot change your Christmas bubble
- you can travel between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble
- you can only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces
- you can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to [the rules in the tier you are meeting in](#)
- if you form a Christmas bubble, you should not meet socially with friends and family that you do not live with in your home or garden unless they are part of your Christmas bubble

You should travel to meet those in your Christmas bubble and return home between the 23 and 27 December. Anyone travelling to or from Northern Ireland may travel on the 22 and 28 December.

You should keep taking steps to reduce the spread of the virus, and this will help ensure that the festive period is as safe as possible. This includes ensuring indoor spaces get as much fresh air as possible, washing your hands regularly and for 20 seconds, and following [rules on self-isolation](#) if you develop symptoms or test positive for coronavirus. You should [get a free NHS test](#) if you have symptoms, have been asked to by your local council or your hospital, or are taking part in a government pilot project

Further information can be found via the government website below.

Source; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

Self-isolation and Christmas bubbles

You must also follow [rules on self-isolation](#), which apply if either you, someone you live with, someone in your childcare or support bubble, or someone you have been in contact with, has symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus. This means you must not form a Christmas bubble if you have coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating. These rules are the law and you must follow them even if it means not meeting with friends or family over Christmas.

If a member of your Christmas bubble tests positive for coronavirus or develops coronavirus symptoms between the 23 and 27 December, or up to 48 hours after members of the bubble last met, all members of the bubble must [self-isolate](#) as if they were members of the same household.

After meeting your Christmas bubble

In the two weeks that follow your last meeting with your Christmas bubble, you should reduce your social contact with people you do not live with as much as possible.

Children can continue to go to school.

You can go to work if you cannot work from home, but you should avoid unnecessary social interaction. Any increase in contact with other people increases the risk you will catch or spread coronavirus.

Symptoms and behaviours

It is critical that everybody observes the following key behaviours, if not the virus will become more prevalent in our environment. The prevalence of the virus is down to us ALL. We must comply with the barriers of control and reduce our tolerance to 'complacency'.

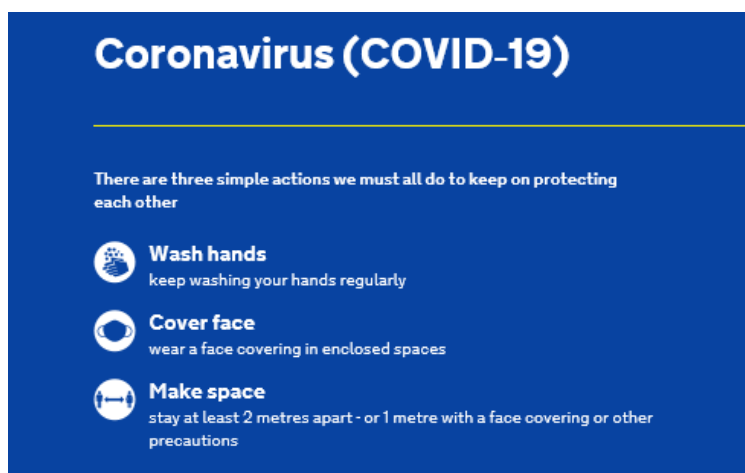


NHS

If you have coronavirus symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

[Get a test now. Do not leave home for at least 10 days](#)



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

There are three simple actions we must all do to keep on protecting each other

- Wash hands**
keep washing your hands regularly
- Cover face**
wear a face covering in enclosed spaces
- Make space**
stay at least 2 metres apart - or 1 metre with a face covering or other precautions

Tier 2 – High Alert levels

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-2-high-alert?priority-taxonomy=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>

Tier 3 – Very High Alert Levels

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-3-very-high-alert>

TIER 2 HIGH ALERT

FROM 2 DEC

MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY	BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS	RETAIL	WORK AND BUSINESS
No mixing of households indoors, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six outdoors.	Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals. Venues must stop taking orders at 10pm and must close by 11pm.	Open.	Everyone who can work from home should do so.
EDUCATION	INDOOR LEISURE	ACCOMMODATION	PERSONAL CARE
Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Children, other supervised activities for children, and children's bubbles permitted.	Open.	Open.	Open.
OVERNIGHT STAYS	WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS	ENTERTAINMENT	PLACES OF WORSHIP
Permitted with household or support bubble.	15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships, wedding receptions and wakes; 30 for funerals.	Open.	Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.
TRAVELLING	EXERCISE	RESIDENTIAL CARE	LARGE EVENTS
Reduce the number of journeys you make and walk or cycle if possible. Avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble. Avoid entering a Tier 3 area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply.	Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but cannot take place indoors if there is any interaction between people from different households. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.	COVID-secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor/nighttime visits only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).	Sport, live performances and business meetings limited to 50% capacity or 2000 people outdoors (whichever is lower) and 50% capacity or 1000 people indoors (whichever is lower).

Find out what support you can get

For example, if you're out of work, need to get food, or want to take care of your mental health.

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If you have any coronavirus symptoms:

A high temperature + A new, continuous cough
A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste.

Get a test and stay at home

For more information and detailed guidance visit: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

TIER 3 VERY HIGH ALERT

FROM 2 DEC

MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY	BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS	RETAIL	WORK AND BUSINESS
No mixing of households indoors, or most outdoor places, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six in some outdoor public spaces (e.g. parks, public gardens).	Hospitality is closed, with the exception of take-away, drive-through or delivery.	Open.	Everyone who can work from home should do so.
EDUCATION	INDOOR LEISURE	ACCOMMODATION	PERSONAL CARE
Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Children, other supervised activities for children, and children's bubbles permitted.	Open. Group activities and classes should not take place.	Closed (with limited exceptions)	Open.
OVERNIGHT STAYS	WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS	ENTERTAINMENT	PLACES OF WORSHIP
We advise against overnight stays other than with household or support bubble.	15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships and wakes; 30 for funerals. Wedding receptions not permitted.	Indoor venues closed.	Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.
TRAVELLING	EXERCISE	RESIDENTIAL CARE	LARGE EVENTS
Avoid travelling outside your area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply. Reduce the number of journeys where possible. Plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble.	Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but people should avoid higher-risk contact activity. Group exercise activities and sports indoors should not take place, unless with your household or bubble. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.	COVID-secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor/nighttime visits only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).	Events should not take place. Drive-in events permitted.

Find out what support you can get

For example, if you're out of work, need to get food, or want to take care of your mental health.

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If you have any coronavirus symptoms:

A high temperature + A new, continuous cough
A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

Get a test and stay at home

For more information and detailed guidance visit: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Flu vaccine

The flu vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. It's offered every year on the NHS to help protect people at risk of flu and its complications.

This information is about the flu vaccine for adults.

[Find out about the children's flu vaccine](#)

The best time to have the flu vaccine is in the autumn before flu starts spreading. But you can get the vaccine later.

Flu vaccine and coronavirus (COVID-19)

Flu vaccination is important because:

- if you're at higher risk from coronavirus, you're also more at risk of problems from flu
- if you get flu and coronavirus at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill
- it'll help to reduce pressure on the NHS and social care staff who may be dealing with coronavirus

If you've had COVID-19, it's safe to have the flu vaccine. It'll be effective at helping to prevent flu.

Who can have the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is given to people who:

- are 50 and over (including those who'll be 50 by 31 March 2021)
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone [who's at high risk from coronavirus](#) (on the NHS shielded patient list)
- frontline health or social care workers

Where to get the flu vaccine

- your GP surgery if you are in an eligible category
- a pharmacy offering the service
- your midwifery service if you're pregnant

If you have your flu vaccine at a pharmacy, you do not have to tell the GP. The pharmacist should tell them.

When returning to work

When returning to work after the Christmas and New Year festivities please remind yourself of the site barriers of control.

- Don't come to work if feeling unwell
- Present yourself at the gatehouse for temperature checking
- Remember to stay 2m apart or if less than 2m then ensure additional precautions and measures are adopted.
- Frequently wash hands for more than 20 seconds and or use hand sanitiser
- Regularly clean down and wipe down your working area, equipment and tools with sanitising wipes
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation.
- Carry out point of work risk assessments to help identify hazards and appropriate solutions to reduce risk.
- Politely challenge those you feel are not following the guidelines
- Raise any concerns to your line manager where Covid barriers are either not being followed or could be improved.

Counselling and Bullying

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is having an impact on everyone's daily lives. During this time, you may be bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also feel low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. These are all common reactions to the difficult situation we face.

It's important that you take care of your mind as well as your body. Most people will find strategies that work for them and the difficult feelings associated with the outbreak will pass. Below are some links for telephone and online advice and guidance services that you may find useful:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/what-can-i-do-to-help-myself-cope>

Call Samaritans free on 116 123 or visit the Samaritans website

Shout 85258 offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when you need immediate assistance. Text "SHOUT" to 85258.

We also provide a confidential counselling service which is available to all ICL employees. Please contact the **Medical Dept. on ext. 3296 or 01287 646523** if you feel you may benefit from this service. Or if you prefer to speak direct to a counsellor, you may contact them on the following numbers to make an appointment:

- Karen Lowes 07824 665289
- Julie Woodier 07709 896542
- Martin Holland 07789 390707

We are aware that some individuals, upon returning to work following a positive Coronavirus test and following the prescribed isolation period, have been subject to unfavourable treatment. This is clearly unacceptable, any employee who does test positive will only return to the workplace after following their prescribed isolation period after which they will no longer be infectious.

Whilst workplace banter is important, it is more important to know that there is a fine line and not to cross it. We will not tolerate bullying and harassment. Harassment and Discrimination – Stops here!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q47u5TRSBZQ&feature=youtu.be>