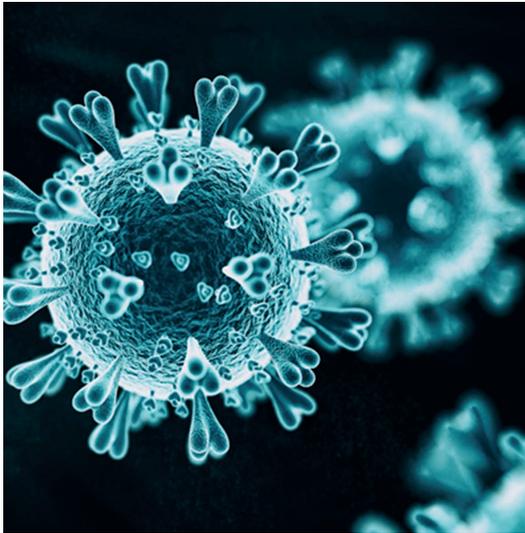


Patient Information

# Coronavirus / COVID 19

## General Advice



This information is aimed to provide self-management advice for you to manage your symptoms at home. If you develop more severe symptoms it is important that you contact your GP, MEDS, out of hours service or in a medical emergency call 999.



## What is Coronavirus/ COVID 19?

It is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

### Signs and symptoms

Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and symptoms and will recover without requiring treatment. Symptoms may vary but commonly are; a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, tiredness, loss or change of taste and smell or a new shortness of breath. Less common symptoms may be; a sore throat, nasal congestion, sneezing, headache, muscle or joint pain, diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting, chills or dizziness, a skin rash, Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes).

If you have more serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, loss of speech or movement, new confusion, reduced consciousness, persistent chest pain or pressure in the chest or bluish lips or face, please seek immediate medical attention by calling 999. (This list is not exhaustive; please consult your GP or MEDS out of hours service for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning).

### Recovery

On average it takes 3–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days. How long it takes to recover from COVID-19 is different for everybody. Many people feel better in a few days or weeks and most will make a full recovery within 12 weeks.

### Managing your symptoms at home

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy can manage their symptoms at home.

Treating a high temperature

If you have a high temperature, it can help to:

- Get lots of rest
- Drink plenty of fluids (water is best) to avoid dehydration – drink enough so your pee is light yellow and clear.
- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you feel uncomfortable.

## Treating a cough

If you have a cough, it's best to avoid lying on your back. Lie on your side or sit upright instead.

To help ease a cough, try having a teaspoon of honey. But do not give honey to babies under 12 months.

If this does not help, you could contact a pharmacist for advice about cough treatments.

## Things to try if you're feeling breathless

If you're feeling breathless, it can help to keep your room cool. Try turning the heating down or opening a window. Do not use a fan as it may spread the virus.

You could also try:

- Breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, with your lips together like you're gently blowing out a candle.
- Sitting upright in a chair.
- Relaxing your shoulders, so you're not hunched.
- Leaning forward slightly – support yourself by putting your hands on your knees or on something stable like a chair.
- Try not to panic if you're feeling breathless. This can make it worse.

## Nutrition and Hydration

Eating well and maintaining a healthy weight is important to maintain your strength and fitness to ensure that your body has enough nutrients (energy, protein, vitamins and minerals) to help protect you from infection and recover from illness. You may not feel hungry or thirsty but it is important to eat and drink well.

**Hydration** - Typically, the average adult needs between 1.5 to two litres of fluid a day. This is the equivalent to around 6-8 mugs of fluid. Checking your pee is so important, as this is a way of monitoring your hydration. Our pee should be pale straw colour or clear. If our pee is dark yellow or orange we need to drink more. If our pee is dark orange or brown, we are severely dehydrated and drinking plenty of fluid is essential to restore our hydration levels. Try to drink regularly throughout the day (this does not include alcohol and fruit juice should be limited due to the high amount of sugar it contains).

**Nutrition** – a balance healthy diet would contain protein foods for healthy strong muscles and the immune system, carbohydrate foods for energy, fruit and vegetables for fibre, essential vitamins and minerals to support your immune system and dairy foods which contain calcium and other minerals for strong bones and teeth. Try to avoid high energy foods that are high in fat.

If you have a medical condition that is affected by your diet please discuss this with a health professional. If you are unable to shop or are struggling to feed yourself please contact Social services for advice and support (Adults 686 179 / Children 686 179).

## Managing Changes to Taste and Smell

Changes to your taste and smell are common symptoms of COVID-19 and can make eating and drinking less enjoyable.

- Experiment with herbs, spices, pepper, chutneys and pickles in cooking.
- If you are struggling with the strong taste of hot foods, try cold foods instead.
- If you go off a particular food, try it again regularly as your tastes may continue to change.

## Fatigue

Fatigue is a normal part of the body's response to fighting a viral infection such as COVID-19. Fatigue may continue for some time after the infection has cleared. It can make you sleep more, feel unsteady on your feet, make standing for long periods difficult as well as affecting your ability to concentrate and your memory.

Tips to reduce fatigue include;

**Rest** - Rest is important for your body as it fights off infection. You need to rest both your body and mind. Keep television, phones and social media to a minimum. Relaxation, breathing and meditation can all support quality rest.

**Sleep** - You may find that you need to sleep more. Make sure you follow healthy sleep habits: ensure your room is as dark as possible, have a bedtime and waking routine, and avoid caffeine, eating late and using electrical items before bed.

**Energy conservation** - Keep activity levels low. Both physical and cognitive (thinking) activities use energy. Try to do only a small number of these activities each day, including basic activities of daily living, such as washing and dressing.

**Allow time** - COVID-19 affects people differently, so give yourself time to recover. Its impact afterwards doesn't always reflect the severity of the virus and you don't have to have been hospitalised to experience fatigue. You may feel pressure to resume your usual activities quickly, but don't rush.

**Have fun** - Do some low energy activities that you enjoy, such as reading or watching TV, for short periods with regular rests.

## How to conserve your energy

When you are ill or recovering from an illness, you are likely to have less energy and feel tired. A simple task, such as putting on your shoes, can feel like hard work. Learning to pace, plan and prioritise your daily activities will help you to save energy.

**Pace** - Pacing yourself will help you have enough energy to complete an activity. You'll recover faster if you work on a task until you are tired rather than exhausted. The alternative, doing something until you're exhausted, or going for the big push, means that you'll need longer to recover.

**Plan** - Look at the activities you normally do on a daily and weekly basis, and develop a plan for how you can spread these activities out. If certain activities make you breathless or fatigued, rather than do them in one go, plan ahead to do them throughout the day. Change the time of an activity: instead of having a bath or shower in the morning when you are busy, have one in the evening. Do weekly activities such as gardening, laundry and food shopping on different days, with rest days in between.

**Prioritise** - Some daily activities are necessary, but others aren't. Ask yourself the following questions to find out which of yours are necessary:

- What do I need to do today? What do I want to do today?
- What can be put off until another day?
- What can I ask someone else to do for me?

## Activities & Exercise

Allow yourself to recover from the initial infection prior to increasing your activities and exercise. If you still feel fatigued after self-isolation but overall, you're improving, keep being gentle with yourself. Slowly try a small amount of light activity that is manageable (probably less than you think) with regular rests. Be mindful that you may feel more tired the next day. Be realistic and kind to yourself. Slowly increase activity levels - people

often increase activity levels too quickly, which can set them back. Go slow and steady with activities and avoid pushing through fatigue.

## Work/education

Returning to work or education after a period of isolation can sometimes be a challenge. Please discuss any concerns or worries you may experience with your employer/education setting on your return.

## Mental health

During a period of isolation mental health can be affected. If you have an outside space this could be utilised to aid mental wellbeing. If you are struggling with your mental wellbeing you can access the following services online:

for adults Qwell <https://www.qwell.io/>

or for children/young adults Kooth <https://www.kooth.com/>

You can also self refer to the Community Wellbeing service on **642540** or online <https://www.gov.im/self-referralCWS>.

**If your health is not improving or you continue to experience persistent symptoms after a few months that interfere with your normal everyday activities it is advisable to speak to your General Practitioner or Health Care Professional.**



Information collated from World Health Organisation,  
NHS England, Royal College of Occupational Therapy,  
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