

WHAT IS MEANT BY 'EXTREMELY VULNERABLE'?

This guidance is for people, including children, who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) because of an underlying health condition, and for their family, friends and carers. It is intended for use in situations where the extremely vulnerable person is living in their own home, with or without additional support. **What do we mean by extremely vulnerable?**

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients
2. People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).

5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

Shielding is for your personal protection, it is your choice to decide whether to follow the measures we advise. Individuals who have been given a prognosis of less than 6 months to live, and some others in special circumstances, could decide not to undertake shielding. This will be a deeply personal decision. We advise calling your GP or specialist to discuss this.

The NHS in England is directly contacting people with these conditions to provide further advice.

If you think you fall into one of the categories of extremely vulnerable people listed above and you have not received a letter by Sunday 29 March 2020 or been contacted by your GP, you should discuss your concerns with your GP or hospital clinician.

We understand this is an anxious time and people considered extremely vulnerable will understandably have questions and concerns. Plans are being readied to make sure you can rely on a wide range of help and support.

What you need to know

If you have an underlying health condition listed above, you are at very high risk of severe illness as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) requiring admission to hospital.

Shielding is a practice used to protect extremely vulnerable people from coming into contact with coronavirus.

You are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks from the day you receive your letter. Please note that this period of time could change.

Visits from people who provide essential support to you such as healthcare, personal support with your daily needs or social care should continue, but carers and care workers must stay away if they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). You may find this guidance on [home care provision](#) useful. All people coming to your home should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds on arrival to your house and often whilst they are there.

You should have an alternative list of people who can help you with your care if your main carer becomes unwell. You can also contact your local council for advice on how to access care.

If you think you have developed symptoms of COVID-19 such as a new, continuous cough or fever, seek clinical advice using the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus service or call NHS 111. Do this as soon as you get symptoms.

If you have someone else living with you, they are not required to adopt these protective shielding measures for themselves. They should do what they can to support you in shielding and they should stringently follow guidance on social distancing, reducing their contact outside the home. If you care for but don't actually live with someone who is extremely vulnerable you should still stringently follow [guidance on social distancing](#).

How do these measures differ from the social distancing guidance for vulnerable people issued?

You are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks from the day you receive your letter.

People who are not clinically extremely vulnerable who have contracted coronavirus (COVID-19) and recovered will be able to go about their normal business. If you are in this group we strongly advise that you should remain at home at all times.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature (above 37.8 °C)

Source: www.gov.uk

Date: 23rd March 2020