Self-isolation pack

Having to self-isolate can leave you feeling scared and cut off – but it's important to remember you're not alone and support is available to help you get through it.

Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions about self-isolating.

Why have I been asked to self-isolate?

NHS Test and Trace have asked you to self-isolate because you have had a positive result for COVID-19 from either a PCR or a rapid lateral flow (LFD) test. You should start self-isolating straight away to reduce the risk that you will pass the virus on to other people.

So what can and can't I do when I'm self-isolating?

The answer is very simple: You cannot go outside your home for any reason. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis. Do not go outside even to buy food or other essentials, except in certain specific circumstances. Any exercise must be taken within your home or garden. Scary as it may sound, this is the law and failure to self-isolate for the necessary time-period can result in a fine of £1,000 or more.

How long do I have to self-isolate for?

You usually have to isolate for 10 full days if you've tested positive for COVID-19. Your period of self-isolation includes the day your symptoms started (or the day you tested positive, whichever happened first) and the next 10 full days. So if, for example, your symptoms started on the 15th of the month (or if you did not have symptoms but your first positive COVID-19 test was taken on the 15th), your self-isolation period ends at 23:59hrs on the 25th of the month.

However, you may be able to stop self-isolating after 6 days if certain conditions are met. You can stop self-isolating after 6 days if you do a rapid LFD test on days 5 and 6 of your self-isolation period and:

- both tests are negative
- you did both tests at least 24 hours apart
- you do not have a high temperature

If you do a rapid lateral flow test on day 5 and test positive, wait 24 hours before you do the next test. You can stop testing after you have had 2 consecutive negative test results.

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If you end your isolation period before 10 full days (because you have had 2 consecutive negative test results), it's important that you take steps to reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 to others. This means you should:

- work from home if you can

- wear a face covering in shops, on public transport and when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors, in crowded places or where there is not much fresh air

- limit contact with people at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19

- follow advice on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19

Do my family, friends, work colleagues or other people I have been in contact with also need to self-isolate?

It depends on their circumstances.

They should self-isolate straight away if:

- they live with you (unless they are not required to self-isolate – check below if this applies to them)

- they have been told by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate following contact with you (unless they are not required to self-isolate – check below if this applies to them)

Your close contacts do not need to self-isolate if they:

- Are below the age of 18 years and 6 months

- Are over 18 and double vaccinated for longer than 14 days.

- Have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial

- Are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons If you are identified as a contact of a positive

If your contacts are not legally required to self-isolate, they are strongly advised to:

- take daily lateral flow tests (1 a day for 7 days) if they are aged 5 years or over

- follow the advice on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19

- limit their contact with people who are at higher risk from COVID-19.

Your close contacts must also still self-isolate if they:

- Have any COVID-19 symptoms (see below for more information)

- Are over 18 years and six months and have not had both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine

- Are over 18 years and six months and had their second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine less than 14 days before being in close contact of someone who has tested positive.

Everyone you have been in close contact with should self-isolate if they develop any of the three main symptoms of COVID-19, even if these are mild. They should also arrange to get a PCR test. If they are at work or school, they should go straight home and start to isolate until they get their test. They shouldn't try to finish their shift or wait until the end of the school day. The three main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature

- a new, continuous cough

- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

With new variants circulating people may experience other symptoms including:

- Headaches

- Sore throat

- Fatigue

If people you have been in close contact with only have these other symptoms, they do not need to self-isolate, but they should get a PCR test and follow the advice on how to stay safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What happens if someone I have been in contact with tests positive?

If someone you have been in contact with tests positive they should follow the advice here on self-isolating. If they tested positive following a rapid lateral flow (LFD) test AND they have symptoms they should arrange a PCR test. If they tested

positive on a rapid LFD test and they do not have any symptoms they should report their result online but they do not need to take a follow-up PCR test, unless:

- they wish to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment

- they have received an email or letter from the NHS because of a health condition that means they may be suitable for new COVID-19 treatments

- they are taking LFD tests as part of research or surveillance programmes, and the programme asks them to take a follow-up PCR test

- they have a positive day 2 LFD test result after they arrive in England.

If you would like further information, you can find this here: Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

We know that self-isolating might be difficult, but Cornwall Council is committed to ensuring everyone receives the right support and we've pulled together a list of useful links and information to help people get through the pandemic.

The support available and where to find it

Self-isolating clearly puts a severe limit on a person's freedoms and ability to do basic things like get food shopping.

Help with shopping and medicines

If you can't get an online food delivery, or friends and family are unable to help you get shopping, help is available.

Volunteer Cornwall (www.volunteercornwall.org.uk/) is delivering shopping and prescriptions to residents and is also providing befriending support.

If you need to access a food bank you can find a list of all of the ones in Cornwall on the Transformation Cornwall website. https://transformation-cornwall.org.uk/resources/update-on-cornish-foodbanks

Council Tax Support

Cornwall Council can help you if you are struggling to pay your council tax. Whatever your age and circumstances, residents who need help should claim Council Tax Support. Claims can be made via the Council Tax Support webpage.

Are you worried about being evicted?

People who rent their homes have been given greater protection against eviction until next year. Landlords will be required to provide tenants with 6 months' notice until at least the end of March 2021.

Anyone struggling to pay their rent is advised to seek help as soon as possible.

If you live in a Cornwall Housing managed home and are struggling to pay the rent, please call the rent management team on 0300 1234 161.

If you live in privately rented accommodation and are worried about being evicted, please get in touch with Cornwall Housing's Prevention and Engagement Team at cornwallhousing.org.uk or by calling 0300 1234 161.

Extra financial support

There are three discretionary funds to support you if you are in need of extra financial help. They are:

- Discretionary Housing Payments are available for residents who rent their home, are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and need extra help to pay their rent.

- Exceptional Relief is available for working age residents in receipt of Council Tax Support and who need further financial help to pay their Council tax.

- The Crisis and Care Award scheme can provide extra help in emergency or disaster situations.

Further details about these schemes are available on the council's Benefits webpage.

£500 government Test and Trace Support Payment

Residents who are receiving certain benefits, are unable to work from home and are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace can now apply for a £500 payment.

The application form is now live on the Cornwall Council website www.cornwall.gov.uk/testandtracesupport and applications can be backdated to 28 September 2020. Anyone who can't apply online should call us on 0300 1234 121 (option 5).

For full details see the link above.

Further coronavirus information

Cornwall Council has an online hub for information on different aspects of coronavirus, including business support, financial support and advice for residents, the new self-isolation grant, the local outbreak plan for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and local COVID-19 data.

Visit https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/coronavirus

Anyone who needs our support can contact our dedicated support email address at covid19@cornwall.gov.uk or ring **0300 1231118**.

The Healthy Cornwall website contains a host of resources to support employers and employees, including an 'easy read' document covering COVID-19 guidance on isolating and contact with others, which is also available in Latvian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Bulgarian, Polish and Romanian.

Visit: www.healthycornwall.org.uk/organisations/healthy-workplaces and use the resources section.

Mental health matters

We know this is an unsettling time and many people may be worried about the virus, school, friends, home life, jobs or money.

It's OK to not be OK. There is lots of help and support available.

If you want to talk or need help with your mental wellbeing, you can call or text:

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly **24/7 NHS Mental Health response line**
t: **0800 038 5300**

Call **116 123** for free to talk to **Samaritans**, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours

Citizens Advice Cornwall (**03444 111 444**) for financial advice or simply text "ADVICE" for general queries or DEBT to 78866

Children and young people can get additional support:

Text "YM" to **85258** to contact the **Shout Crisis Text Line**

Reach out on the Your way live chat service your-way.org.uk/coronavirus

Find help and support at kooth.com which is an online wellbeing community for young people

Find more advice on how to stay mentally well on the Cornwall Council website here.