

# Who are the High Risk Groups?

## Vulnerable



Pregnant women



Healthcare workers



Over 70s

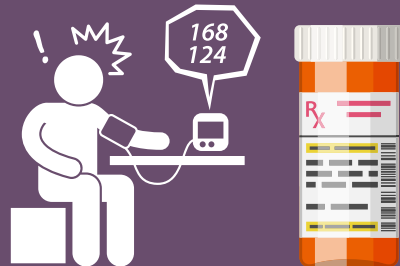
Anyone can fall seriously ill from contracting COVID-19, however the risk of serious illness is higher for some compared to others.

Not only are they more likely to get ill, but they are also expected to become more severely ill.

These groups are more likely to be hospitalised.



## Extremely vulnerable



Underlying medical conditions



Immunocompromised (weaker immune system)

## All high risk groups should be sure to:

- 01** Stay at home as much as you possibly can.
- 02** If and when you must go out, follow social distancing and wear a face covering.
- 03** Self-isolate and book a test if you experience symptoms.

# Your guide to COVID-19

COVID-19 is a virus that mostly affects the lungs and airways. Identified and named in 2019, it is caused by a new strain of the coronavirus.

The virus can be spread from person to person through contact with respiratory droplets (e.g. saliva or mucus) from those infected.

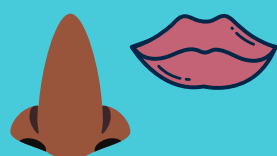
There is currently no vaccine for the new coronavirus, but there are several in development.

## Symptoms

### Main symptoms:



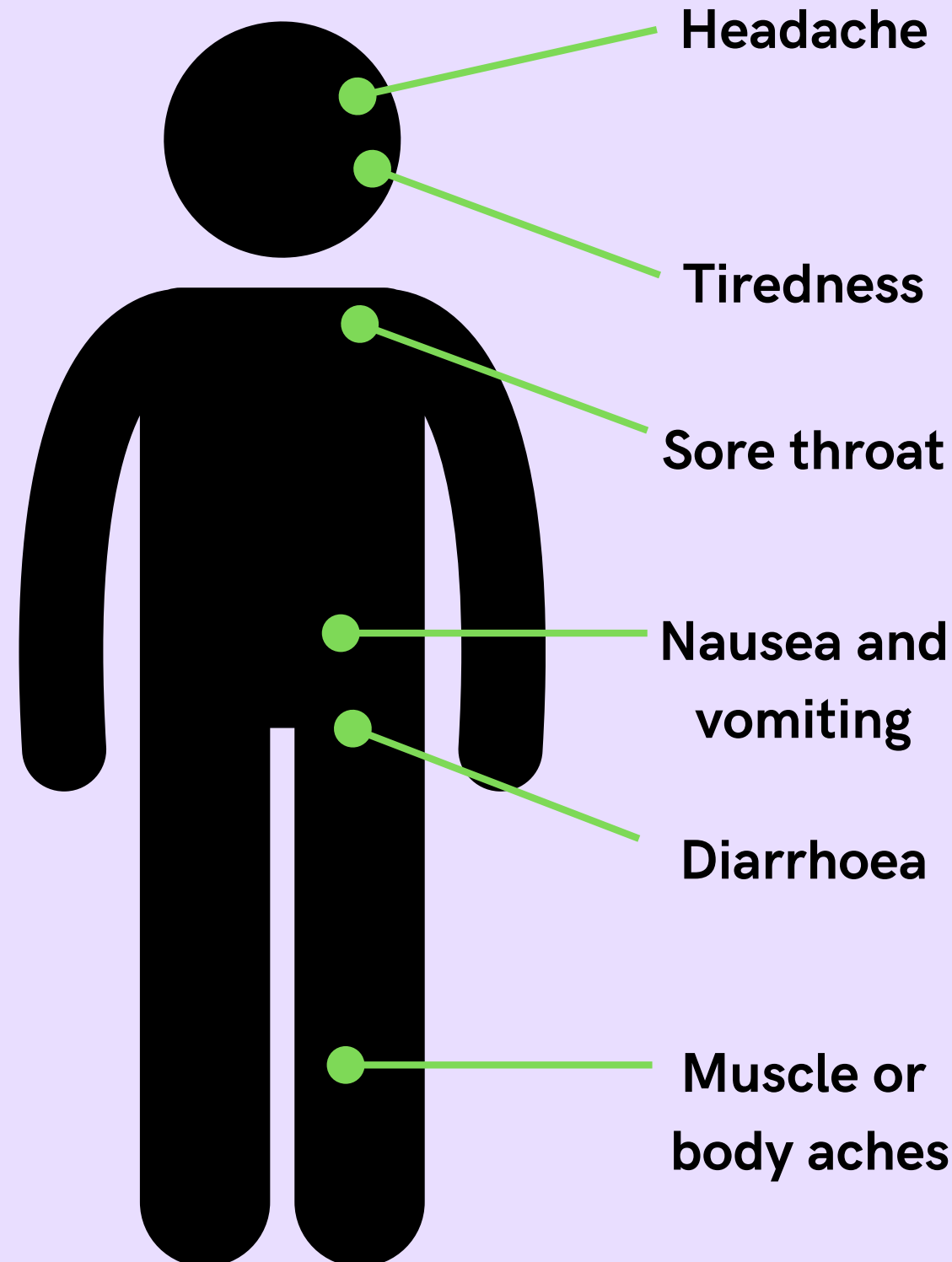
Fever (high temperature above 38°C)



Loss/change in sense of smell or taste



A new, continuous cough

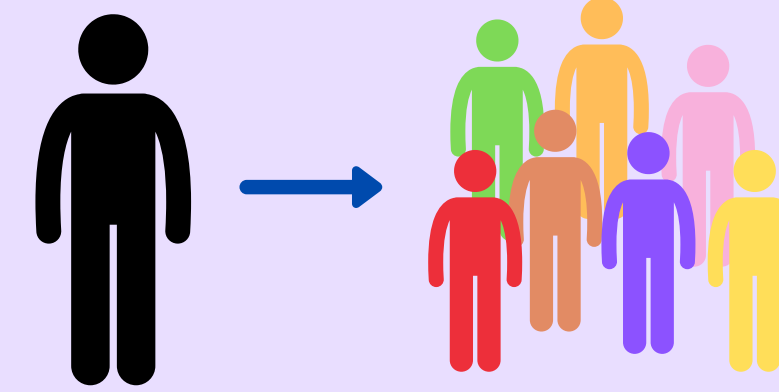


If you have any of these symptoms, call 119 for COVID-19 testing or visit your local test centre and self isolate for 14 days.

Avoid going to the GP, pharmacist and hospital to protect others.

## Transmission

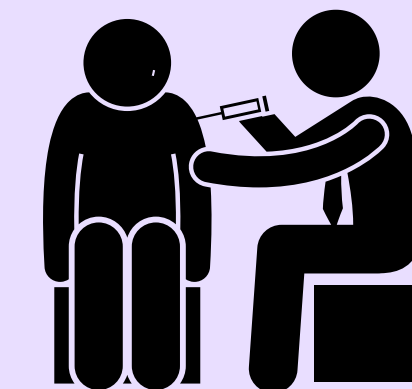
On average every 10 people infected will infect between 12 and 15 other people.



Wear a face covering in public spaces and on public transport  
Make sure it is covering your nose, mouth and chin.

As flu season approaches, it is important to protect yourself from contracting the flu as well as coronavirus.

If you get flu and coronavirus at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill.



Check nhs.uk to see if you are eligible for a free flu vaccine

## Prevention

Coronavirus is spread through respiratory droplets, so the spread can be prevented by:



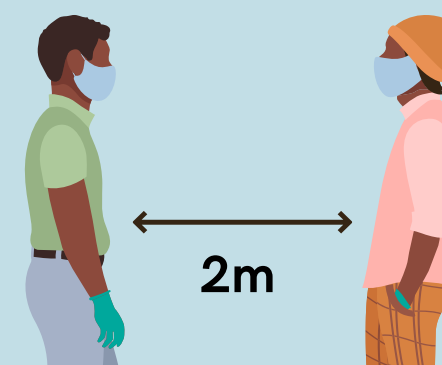
Throw away used tissues and masks into a closed bin immediately after use



Follow the advice from NHS England and gov.uk rather than circulating messages/rumours



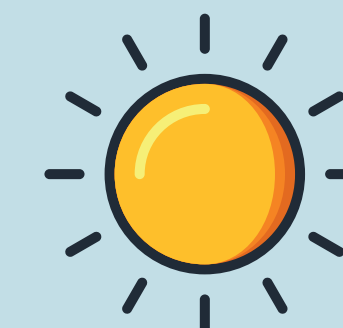
Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow when coughing and sneezing



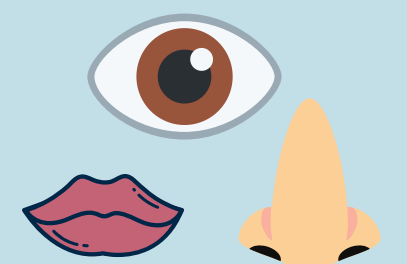
Social distancing



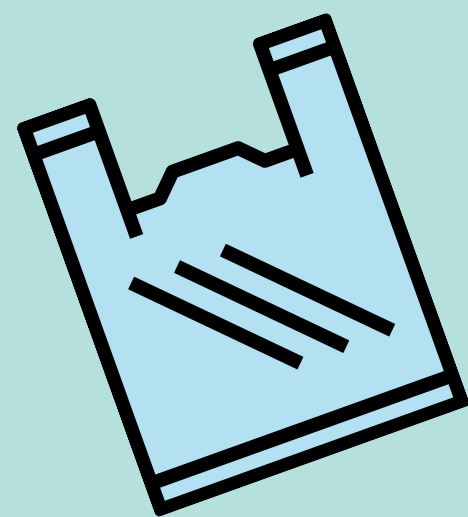
Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and warm water



Maintaining normal levels of vitamin D reduces the risk of complications of COVID



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth



Keep in a clear plastic resealable bag when it is not being used

## How should I wear a face covering?



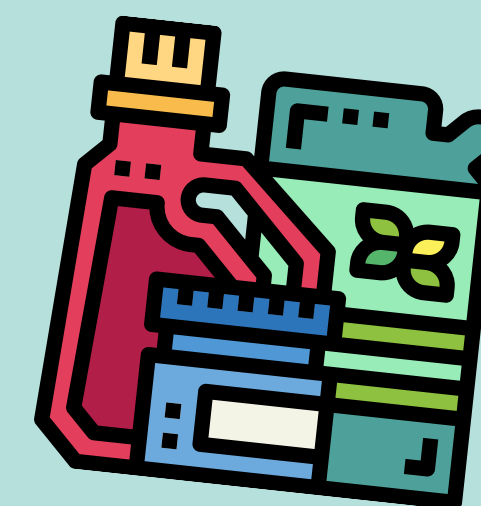
1 Wash or sanitise your hands before touching the mask.



2 Ensure it fits your mouth and nose snugly, and covers your chin.



3 If you need to cough/sneeze, leave the mask on.



Wash the fabric face covering after each use in hot water with soap or detergent

# Face Coverings



When removing your face covering, do it by the straps so that you do not touch any droplets that the mask has filtered.



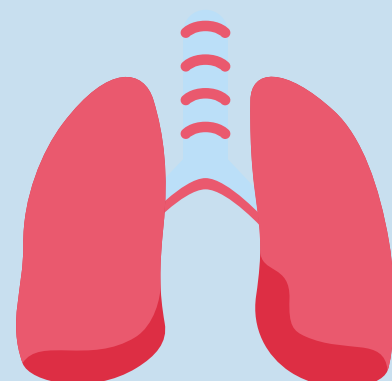
## Explained



If 2 people are wearing face coverings, there is less risk for transmission of COVID-19.

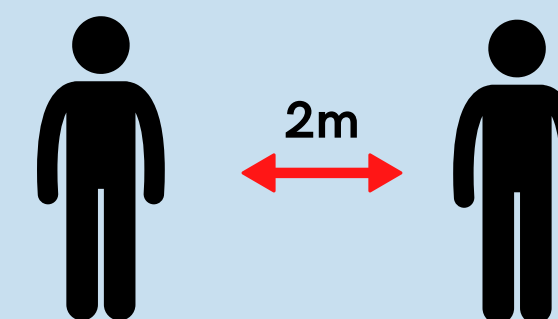


COVID-19 is spread via liquid droplets from a cough or sneeze.



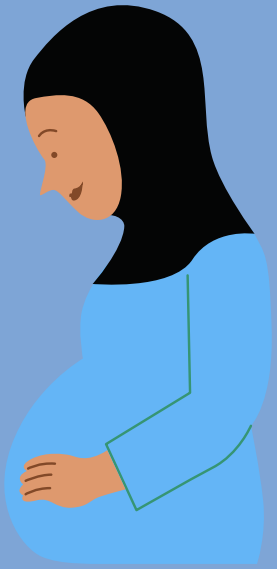
The face covering covers your mouth and nose, so there is less risk of the virus spreading within your group.

Even if you are going out in public with your household, you need to wear your face covering to protect vulnerable people around you.



Maintain social distancing even when wearing mask





# High Risk Groups

*Lewisham Primary Care BME Network  
in conjunction with  
The Do No Harm Collective*





# What does 'high risk' mean?

Anyone can fall seriously ill from contracting COVID-19, however the risk of serious illness is higher for some compared to others. These groups of people are referred to as **high risk**.

Not only are they more likely to get ill, but they are also expected to become more severely ill. These groups are more likely to be **hospitalised**, be in **intensive care** or need a **ventilator**.

There are two groups that are at an increased risk from severe illness as a result of COVID-19:

Extremely vulnerable



Clinical Risk **vs** Environmental Risk

Having a serious, long-term health condition.

Being frequently exposed to the virus.



Immunocompromised  
(weaker immune system)



Underlying medical  
conditions

ALL high risk groups must keep up to date with their flu vaccinations.

Vulnerable



Healthcare workers



Pregnant women



Over 70's

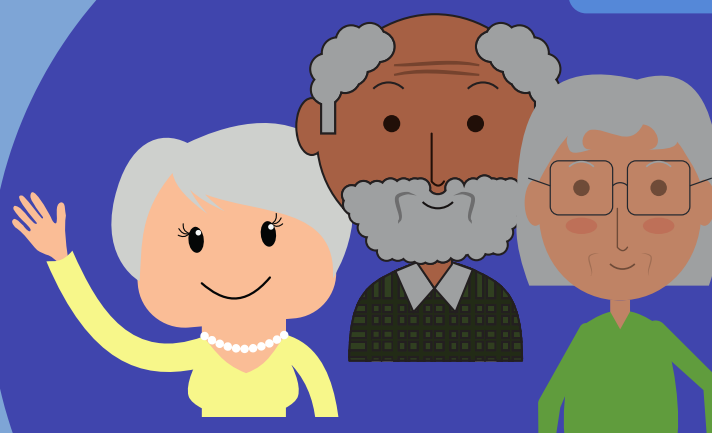
In adults, the risk of severe illness from coronavirus increases with age, putting **the elderly at high risk.**

As you get older, the risk of being hospitalised from coronavirus increases.

**Vulnerable**



The *likelihood* of having long-term conditions increases as you age and the **immune system weakens.**



**Over 70's**

Infections tend to do more damage to the body than they would in a younger person.

This puts over 70's at higher risk of infection.



**Stay at home**  
whenever possible.



Try not to interact with other high risk groups or people who are self-isolating.

Pregnant women have been included in the high risk list as a *precaution*.

The immune system can be overworked and thus weaker.

Vulnerable



In pregnancy, the immune system changes to protect both mother and child from disease.



Pregnant  
women

So some parts of the immune system are enhanced and others are weaker.



Stay at home as much as you possibly can.



If and when you must go out, follow social distancing and wear a face covering.

Self-isolate, book a test and speak to your midwife if you experience symptoms.

Underlying medical conditions can affect the immune system and similar to immunocompromised people, results in a *weakened immune system*.

So the body's ability to fight off infection is weaker.

With the immune system already tackling the long-term illness, it can't respond as quickly to other illnesses, e.g. a virus.

Continue to take your medications as prescribed.



Have specific medical conditions

Extremely clinically vulnerable

Stay at home as much as possible, if you must go out, socially distance when you can.

Sickle cell disease

Kidney disease

Cystic fibrosis,  
Asthma or COPD

Diabetes

Cancer  
Cardiovascular  
conditions





Immunocompromised people have an immune system that isn't as strong as it should be. So it is **unable to adequately fight against bacteria and viruses.**



This is why immunocompromised people are more likely to become ill and to a more severe degree.

There are many reasons why someone may be immunocompromised.

Immunocompromised  
(weaker immune system)



Extremely clinically  
vulnerable

Illnesses, such as  
cancer and HIV/AIDS...

Medications, such as  
steroids...

and organ transplants  
can lead to this.



Continue with your regular treatment plan. **DO NOT stop taking your medicine.**



Wear a face  
covering at all  
times.



Stay at home as much as possible,  
if you must go out, **socially distance.**

Healthcare workers in these times are constantly exposed to COVID-19 patients and despite PPE, can become infected.

The constant exposure increases the likelihood of infection. This is why healthcare workers and support staff are classed as high risk.

To control the infection:  
Make sure that you are cleaning the room in between patients.

Make sure to ask your employer for a healthcare risk assessment, especially if you have a chronic condition or are BAME.



**Healthcare  
workers**

**Vulnerable**



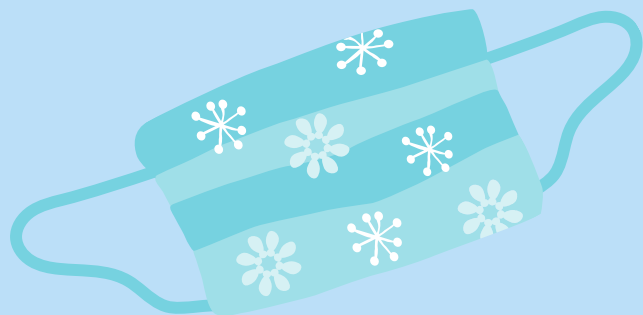
Wash hands between patients and follow safety guidelines.



Wear full PPE at all times when at work.



Change clothes before you leave work, socially distance and wear face coverings when out and about.



# Face coverings explained

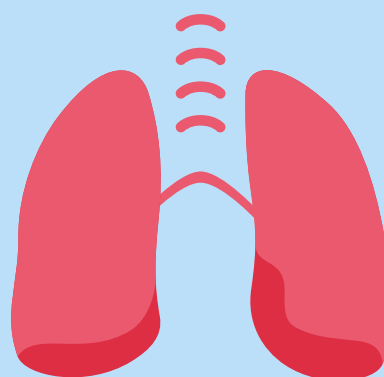
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# Why are face coverings being used?

**COVID-19** is spread via respiratory droplets (liquid spread from a cough or sneeze which are able to reach your lungs).

Even if you are going out in public with your household, you need to wear your face covering to protect key workers and others around you.



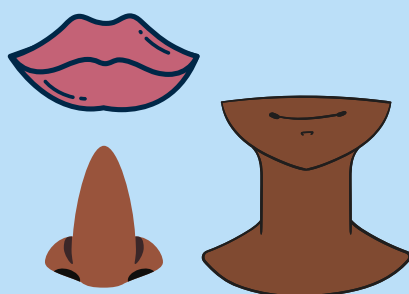
By wearing a mask, you are covering your nose and mouth, reducing risk of the virus reaching and infecting your lungs and other organs!

**This is why face coverings are mandatory in the UK.**

# How should I wear a face covering?



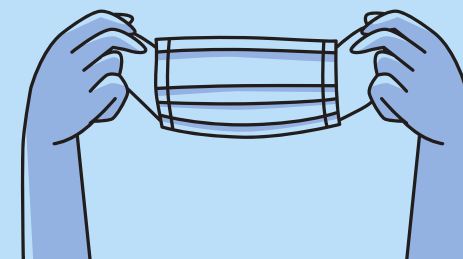
1 Wash or sanitise your hands before touching the mask.



2 Ensure it fits your nose, mouth and chin snugly.



3 If you need to cough/sneeze, leave the mask on.



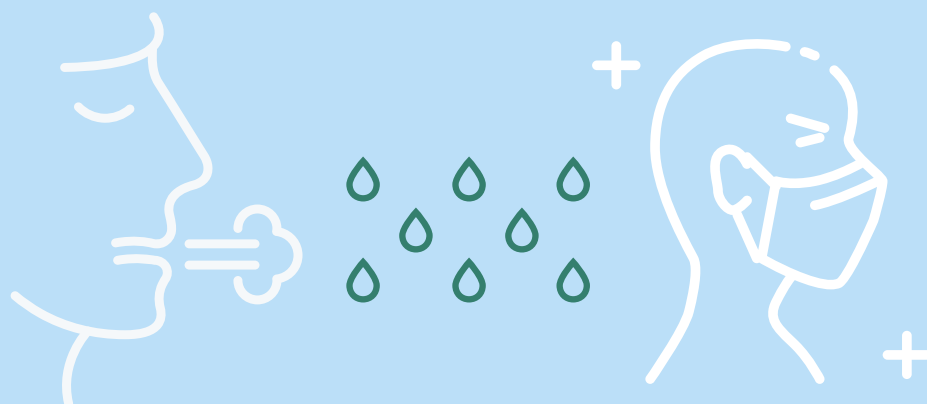
4 Only remove from the straps, do not touch the front

If you are not a healthcare professional, you don't need the blue medical mask - fabric masks are safe enough for the general public.

## Fabric masks

Keep in a clear plastic resealable bag when it is not being used

Wash the mask after each use in hot water with soap/detergent



Remember, you are wearing the mask to protect vulnerable members of the public from the virus as well as yourself!

If you cough, but you are wearing a mask, there is reduced risk of spreading the virus.



# Myths surrounding face coverings

COVID-19 is in the air so when I take off the face covering there is no difference.

If I wear a face covering I will be breathing in carbon dioxide repeatedly, which will make me dizzy.

Anything can be used as a face covering - a scarf, a t-shirt, etc...

COVID-19 does not linger in the air - if 2 people are wearing face coverings, there is reduced risk of droplets spreading.

The face covering is not tight enough to cause this; the material is thick enough to stop droplets but not thick enough to cause carbon dioxide build up.

Currently, there is not enough evidence to support this. When buying a face covering look for high thread counts or multi layers.

I don't need to socially distance if I am wearing a face covering.

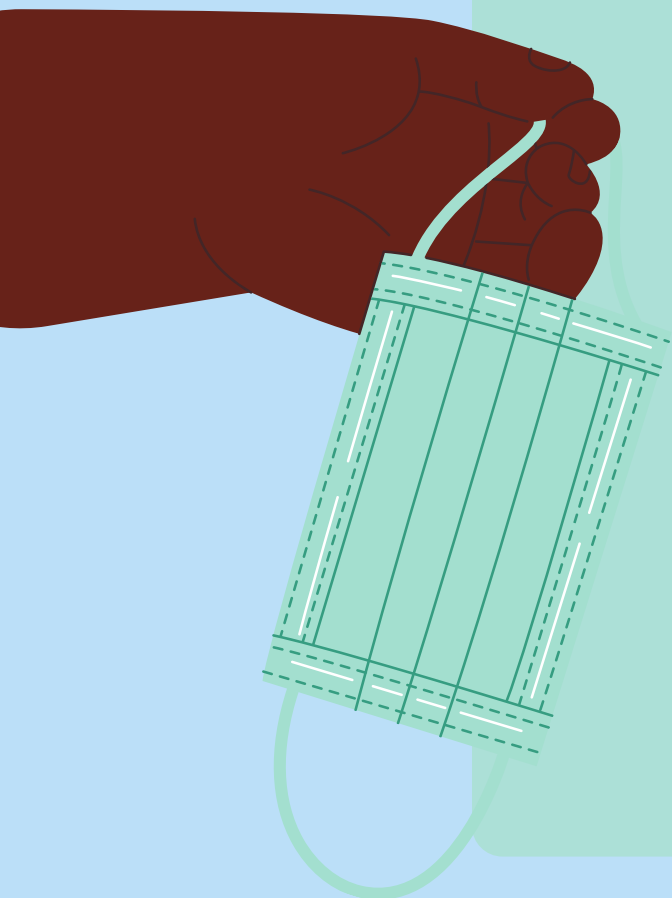
I have a respiratory condition - wearing a face covering is dangerous for me.

If I am wearing a visor I don't need to wear a face covering.

You should still be standing 1-2 metres away from people outside of your household, even when wearing a face covering.

Speak to your local healthcare professional regarding specific guidance for yourself.

Wear both - there is a large gap under the visor, so healthcare professionals wear both when at work.



**FACE COVERINGS  
ARE NOW  
COMPULSORY IN  
PUBLIC SPACES AND  
TRANSPORT IN  
ENGLAND.**

**YOU RISK A £200  
FINE IF YOU DO  
NOT COMPLY  
AND AREN'T  
EXEMPT.**





# Why should I take my medication?

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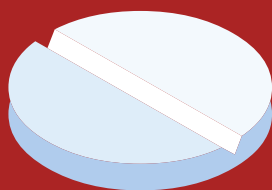
# Why is it important that I take my medication as prescribed?

Medication is prescribed to improve your health and/or condition. It can help provide a better quality of life.

Your medication has been prescribed in a specific way to ensure that it does its job properly in your body.



Taking it incorrectly can lead to nasty side effects, put you in danger, or significantly decrease how well it works.



Don't break your medicine in half, unless your healthcare professional has said this is ok. If broken improperly, this can lead to an uneven dose, a bitter taste or may not dissolve properly.

If it says don't drink alcohol, don't. This is usually because it will interfere with the drug in your body, leading to potential dangers. It may also cause you to vomit extensively, cause serious confusion, or make you unable to drive.



# Why is it important that I take my medication as prescribed?

A lot of medicines may tell you to avoid food and dairy when taking them. They interfere with how your body absorbs the drug. Your body will not be able to absorb the drug properly and the drug won't work well.



They may also tell you not to eat/drink grapefruit. Grapefruit will interfere with how the drug is absorbed. This can lead to high concentrations of the drug in your blood and may cause side effects.

Some medications should be taken at specific times of day. This is to maximise the effects of the drug. Consistently taking them at the wrong time of the day can reduce the effectiveness of your medication.





# What if I don't want to take my medication?

My medicine makes me...



feel numb



gain weight



feel tired



feel sick/  
nauseous



breakout  
in spots



feel weird

Work with your healthcare professional, it is not a 'be all end all' situation. If your medication makes you feel weird/off, discuss it with them.

They might change the drug, the dose, or even suggest an alternative. If it disrupts you, its a conversation worth having.

But i feel better?

Even if you feel better early, do not stop taking your medicine unless instructed by your doctor.

If it is a short term medication, i.e. antibiotics, ensure that you complete your full course.

If its a long term medication, and you feel you no longer need it, talk to your doctor. It's a conversation not an order.

I believe my faith/God will heal me, I don't need medication.

Science and religion can coexist. We appreciate your religion and beliefs and want to provide quality care, which is why you should take your medication.



# What if I don't want to take my medication?



I can't afford it.

Check and see if you're exempt from paying for your prescriptions. You can ask your local pharmacist, or search online.

I keep forgetting to take it.

Try and incorporate it into your daily routine. Set an alarm, ask a friend or family member to remind you. You can use a weekly tablet box or structure taking them around meals.

I don't want my loved ones knowing that I'm on medication.

Find a safe space to take your medication. Tell your loved ones, when/if you feel comfortable doing so.

The whole thing is too complicated.

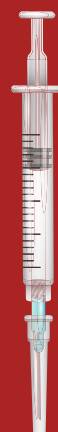
The instructions are unclear.

Next time you pick up your prescription, see your pharmacist and ask them if they can explain it to you. You aren't an inconvenience, it is their job.

I can't be bothered.

Nobody can force you to take your medication, but at the end of the day, the point of them is to help you.

It is not always easy and sometimes you might struggle to see the point, but try to remember that the medication is to improve your health and/or condition.



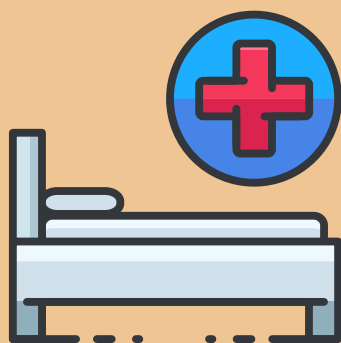


# Engage with Primary Care

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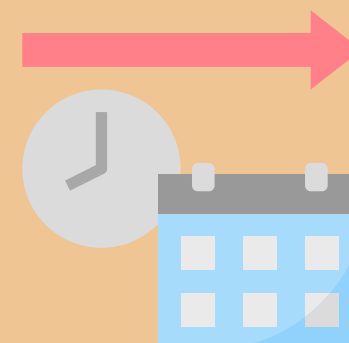
## If you don't get help when you are ill...



The longer you leave it, the worse it can get. This can mean worse treatment outcomes and options.



Longer recovery time. You may need to take more time off work than originally planned, and spend more time on medication.



You could increase risk of long-term conditions, or you may end up getting ill many times in the following months.

## We understand some of the reasons why you may not be getting help...

A society which presumes/encourages immigrants to be self sufficient, making it hard to accept when you do need help

Not wanting loved ones to know they're sick

Fear of discrimination


Beliefs that a higher power will cure illness alone

Many may feel guilty or unable to take time off work if sick

**These concerns are all valid, however you must look after yourself.**


# It's going to be okay.

We know that it is not easy,  
but it is always best to  
address your concerns.



Currently, telephone appointments are the main type available at GP surgeries, but face to face appointments may be done if further assessment is needed. **Call in the morning when your surgery opens to get an emergency appointment that day.**

You are entitled to use all services offered by the NHS. You aren't being a nuisance, and what may seem small to you may be something very important to discuss.



If you feel your concerns aren't being met, ask that everything that you requested was documented.

2

Get a second opinion  
when necessary.



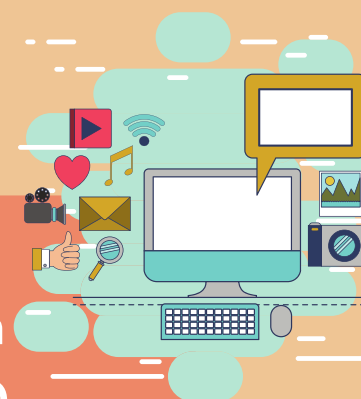
# I am a healthcare professional, how can I encourage my BAME patients to seek help when they need it?



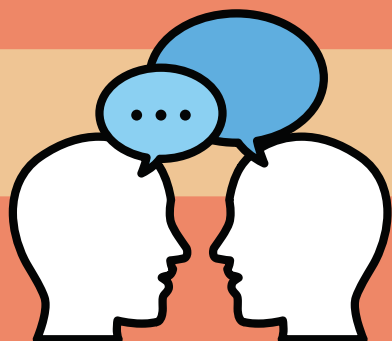
Regularly reflect on your experiences with all patients to find room for improvement.



Educate yourself on the true differences between demographics.



Take an implicit association test on [harvard.edu](https://www.harvard.edu) for 10 minutes to check for biases you may have.



Create a safe space when you are having your consultation, let them feel heard.

Instead of only following visual and vocal cues regarding all patient's pain, ask about how it is affecting their lifestyle, mood and **productivity at work** instead of just ability to work.



Make all patients aware of the services they have available, implement alternative methods for getting emergency appointments, etc...

# Obesity and weight loss explained



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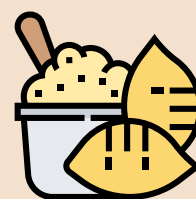
# How can I eat healthily on a budget, and still enjoy traditional meals?



Don't use salt and maggi together to season food



Limit the use of ghee in your cooking



Cut down the size of pounded yam

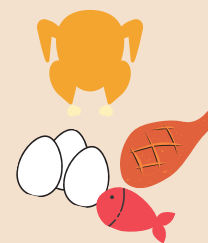


Boil dumplings and plantain instead of frying them

Use less palm oil when you cook stew and soups



For more advice on diet, check out the Eatwell guide on the gov.uk website!



Reduce beef, goat and lamb intake and try turkey, chicken, eggs and fish (with 1 oily tinned fish a week)



Use coconut or vegetable oil as a healthier alternative for palm oil



Substitute some seasonings with vegetable stock and bouillon stock



Stop frying meat, and cut the some skin and fat off before cooking it

# How can I be active without a garden and a gym membership?



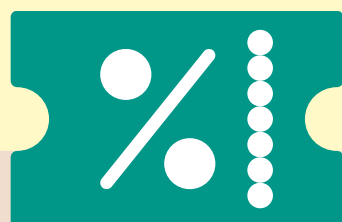
The NHS weight loss plan is an online free 12 week diet and exercise plan



Anything that raises your heart rate can be counted as exercise! Even fast-paced walking



Search 'free home workouts' on Youtube



The Healthy Start Programme helps pregnant women and families with young children by providing weekly vouchers for fresh and frozen fruit and veg, milk, formula and vitamins!

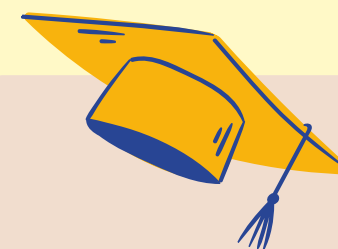
To find out if you are eligible, check the gov.uk website

OneYou app, a free app which promotes many different lifestyle changes



Where possible, get off the bus/tube a stop earlier and walk the distance every day/few days

You can be referred to a free exercise programme and dietician by a healthcare professional



Join your university/college /school's free sports/wellness teams and engage in weekly meetings

# Why might someone be obese?



Genetics and ethnicity, particularly South Asian, Black African and Black Caribbean



Liver disease, heart failure, acute/chronic kidney disease, certain cancers, thyroid disease and many more long-term health conditions.

There are higher rates of obesity in more deprived areas in the UK. Why?



Less space to exercise without a garden  
Less access to green spaces in their local area



Cheaper fast food outlets and advertising in these regions

Teens from higher income households are able to pay for weekend team sports, so can have 2x the amount of weekly exercise



Low fat, salt and sugar options are more expensive than less healthy options, when they should be cheaper.



Some medications can contribute to minor weight gain, however it is important that you still take your medicine as prescribed. If you are concerned, talk to your healthcare professional.

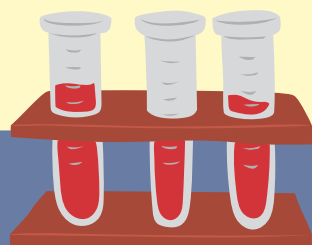




Decreased risk of heart disease



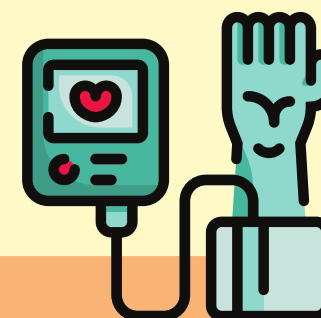
Decreased risk of heart attacks and stroke



Reduced blood sugar levels resulting in less risk in diabetes associated conditions e.g. diabetic foot disease or eye disease



**What are the benefits of weight loss?**



Decrease in blood pressure

You start to see these benefits after losing only 5-10% of your weight.



Reduced inflammation of the body



Improvements in sleep apnoea - a condition where you stop and start breathing occasionally while you sleep

**...and much more!**