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News

## New 'stay at home' guidance published

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Part of: [Health and social care](#), [Public safety and emergencies](#), [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland](#)

Changes from 1 May.

From Sunday 1 May public health advice will change to a 'stay at home' message replacing self-isolation for people who have symptoms or have tested positive for Covid-19.

People who have symptoms of Covid-19 and who have a fever or are too unwell to carry out normal activities will be asked to 'stay at home' while they are unwell or have a fever. They will no longer be advised to take a PCR test.

The changes, part of the Test and Protect Transition Plan which was published last month, will also see all contact tracing ending.

As previously announced, testing for the general population will end on 30 April with test sites closing at that point too. However, testing will remain available to certain groups in order to protect high risk settings, support clinical care and for surveillance purposes.

Those groups include health and social care workers, care home and hospital visitors, patients groups eligible for treatment, hospital patients, unpaid carers and people in prison.

Other adults who have symptoms of Covid-19 and other respiratory illnesses and have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, are advised to stay at home until their fever has gone or they feel well enough.

Children and young people aged 18 and under with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, do not need to stay at home and can continue to attend education settings.

They should only stay at home if they are unwell and have a high temperature. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a fever and they feel well enough to attend.

This guidance reflects the fact that children and young people generally have a higher likelihood than adults of regular instances of respiratory symptoms from non-Covid illnesses.

The Protect Scotland app will also be closed down shortly, but users are encouraged to keep the app on their phones in case it is needed again at a future date.

NHS Scotland will also be taken out of emergency footing at the end of Saturday 30 April as Covid-19 cases continue to fall.

However, with continued demands on services across health and social care, there remains a need for caution to protect vital services.

Patients should only attend A&E if their condition is an emergency, to continue to limit the pressure on services. Patients can contact their GP during the day, local pharmacy or call NHS24 on 111 as an alternative.

Health Secretary Humza Yousaf said:

“Scotland’s Test and Protect programme has been one of the key interventions in our response to Covid-19, the success of which has been due, in no small part, to the remarkable staff and volunteers working in Test and Protect - my sincere thanks go to them.

“I would also like to thank the Scottish public for their commitment and willingness to engage with Test and Protect when it was required of them and helping to protect their fellow citizens.

“However, we recognise we are now in a different phase of the pandemic. The primary purpose of testing is changing from population-wide testing to reduce transmission, to a targeted response focused on reducing severe harm of the virus.

“As we are now seeing a steady reduction in new Covid cases, the NHS will no longer remain on emergency footing after Saturday 30 April. But we must continue with a measured approach to support the recovery and renewal of our NHS.

“This will require balancing capacity of the NHS and the wellbeing of the workforce to respond to increasing demands for urgent care while reducing the backlog of planned care.”

Further information on the stay at home guidance and measures you can take to limit the spread of Covid-19 can be found at <https://bit.ly/39polwD> and from 1 May on [nhsinform.scot/covid19](https://nhsinform.scot/covid19).

## Background

From 1 May, Covid-19 symptoms include continuous cough; high temperature, fever or chills; loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell; shortness of breath; unexplained tiredness, lack of energy; muscle aches or pains; unusual hunger; headaches; sore throat, stuffy or runny nose; and diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick.

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