

in shielding and to stringently follow [guidance on social distancing](#).

1. Minimise as much as possible the time other family members spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
2. Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If you can, you should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure you use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.
3. If you do share a toilet and bathroom with others, it is important that they are cleaned after use every time (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with you using the facilities first.
4. If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while they are present. If you can, you should take your meals back to your room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If you are using your own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.
5. We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

If the rest of your household stringently follow advice on social distancing and minimise the risk of spreading the virus within the home by following the advice above, there is no need for them to also shield alongside you.

Handwashing and respiratory hygiene

and medicines if you are shielding?

Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services. If this is not possible, then the public sector, business, charities, and the general public are gearing up to help those advised to stay at home. Please discuss your daily needs during this period of staying at home with carers, family, friends, neighbours or local community groups to see how they can support you. Please visit gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable from Tuesday 24 March 2020 to register for the support that you need. This includes help with food, shopping deliveries and additional care you might need.

The government is helping pharmacies to deliver prescriptions. Prescriptions will continue to cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not currently have your prescriptions collected or delivered, you can arrange this by:

1. Asking someone who can pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy, (this is the best option, if possible).
2. Contacting your pharmacy to ask them to help you find a volunteer (who will have been ID checked) or deliver it to you.

You may also need to arrange for collection or delivery of hospital specialist medication that is prescribed to you by your hospital care team.

If you receive support from health and social care organisations, for example, if you have care provided for you through the local authority or health care system, this will continue as normal. Your health or social care provider will be asked to take additional precautions to make sure that you are protected. The advice for formal carers is included in the [home care provision](#).

What should you do if you have hospital and GP appointments during this period?

Social isolation, reduction in physical activity, unpredictability and changes in routine can all contribute to increasing stress. Many people including those without existing mental health needs may feel anxious about this impact including support with daily living, ongoing care arrangements with health providers, support with medication and changes in their daily routines.

If you are receiving services for your mental health, learning disability or autism and are worried about the impact of isolation please contact your keyworker/care coordinator or provider to review your care plan. If you have additional needs please contact your key worker or care coordinator to develop a safety or crisis plan.

Understandably, you may find that shielding and distancing can be boring or frustrating. You may find your mood and feelings are affected and you may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping and you might miss being outside with other people.

At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour which in turn can make you feel worse. There are simple things you can do that may help, to stay mentally and physically active during this time such as:

- look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the NHS website
- spend time doing things you enjoy – this might include reading, cooking, other indoor hobbies or listening to favourite radio programmes or watching TV
- try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs
- try spending time with the windows open to let in the fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight, or get out into any private space, keeping at least 2 metres away from your neighbours and household members if you are sitting on your doorstep

Constantly watching the news can make you feel more worried. If you think it is affecting you, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading, or listening to media coverage of the outbreak. It may help to only check the news at set times or limiting this to a couple of times a day.