

Information for Contacts of those testing positive for COVID-19

This leaflet contains information about Covid-19 and self-isolation. For further information, please visit [covid.gov](https://www.covid.gov).

[About COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 is caused by a virus (more specifically, a coronavirus) that affects the respiratory system (lungs and breathing tubes).

[Symptoms](#)

People confirmed to have COVID-19 may experience these symptoms:

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature (above 38 degrees C)
- A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)
- Shortness of breath
- A sore throat

Infections with mild symptoms (such as cold-like symptoms) or no symptoms at all are likely, with most cases being able to manage symptoms and recovery at home. However, some people can become seriously ill and require treatment in hospital. Those most at risk of becoming seriously unwell are those with weakened immune systems, particularly older people and those with pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

[How it spreads](#)

Understanding of the virus and the disease it causes continues to evolve. COVID-19 can be spread through person-to-person contact via an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as through coughing. The virus may also be spread by touching infected surfaces.

[About close contacts](#)

A 'close contact' is defined as any person with the following exposure to someone with COVID-19 during the time that they are infectious:

- 15 minutes or more of face-to-face contact within 2 meters; or
- Having had physical contact or direct contact with infectious secretions (e.g. being coughed on); or
- In a shared enclosed space (such as a household or classroom) for 15 minutes or more; or
- In an aircraft, sitting within two seats (in any direction); or
- A healthcare worker or other person providing care to a case, or laboratory workers handling specimens from a case, without the recommended PPE

Not everyone who has had close contact with someone infected is then confirmed to have COVID-19, however the risk is far greater. Moreover, isolating potential cases is the best way to break potential onward spread.

[What you need to do](#)

Guidance for self-isolation varies according to vaccination status. If you:

Have been vaccinated (and 14 days have passed after your first vaccine):

- You are not required to home isolate (unless you have a new onset of active symptoms of Covid-19).

- You can continue as normal, using a mask when outside the house or when socialising outside of your normal bubble.
- You will be asked to have a Covid-19 test on days 5 and 10 to confirm you remain infection free.

Haven't been vaccinated (or have had the first vaccine but 14 days have not yet passed):

- You will be asked to self-isolate for 10 days.
- You will be asked to have a Covid-19 test on day 10 to confirm you are infection free.

By self-isolating, you are helping to protect your friends and family, and other people in your community, as well as making sure the GHA does not get overwhelmed.

An advisor will contact you during your self-isolation period to monitor your progress. If you develop symptoms of Covid-19:

- Call 111 immediately and inform your advisor when they call you.
- Spanish residents should call 900400061 if they have symptoms of Covid-19 or 955545060 for other coronavirus related information.

Self-isolation

When asked to self-isolate you must do the following:

- Stay at home:
 - Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis. Nobody should go out even to buy food or other essentials, and any exercise must be taken within your home.
- Avoid contact with other household members as much as possible:
 - Keep communal areas well ventilated, avoid using shared facilities while others are present. Use a separate bathroom where possible. Consider using a face covering in shared parts of your home.
 - Clean shared areas: Use detergent or bleach to disinfect touched surfaces and objects such as door knobs after use. Do not share utensils, cups and towels, including hand towels and tea towels.
 - Wash your hands often: Use soap and water for 20 seconds or hand sanitiser.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes: Use a disposable tissue or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
 - Laundry: To minimise the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
 - Waste disposal: Personal waste (such as used tissues) should be put in two bags, one after the other and left for 72hrs before it is placed in your external household waste bin.
- Do not have social visitors such as family and friends come to your home.

Essential supplies:

- If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online. Delivery drivers should not come into your home, so make sure you ask them to leave items outside for collection.

Carers:

- If you or a family member receive essential care in your home, then carers should continue to visit. Carers should follow care agency guidance to reduce the risk of passing on the infection.

Routine medical care:

- All routine medical and dental appointments should usually be cancelled while you and the family are staying at home. If you are concerned or have been asked to attend in person within the period you are home isolating, discuss this with your medical contact first (for example, your GP or dentist, local hospital or outpatient service). To speak to GP services, call 20052441.

Work:

- Leave should be covered under your sick leave allowance.
- Please email covidsicknote@gha.gi with your full Name, Date of Birth, statement explaining that you have been told to isolate and your employers email address. The sick note will be sent to your employer to justify this absence.

Mental health:

- Staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely, you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.
- It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the Every Mind Matters website.
- Plan ahead and think about what you will need in order to stay at home for the full duration of isolation.
- Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have stayed at home for a week or more have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films. If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home.