

People at higher risk from coronavirus

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher.

There are 2 levels of higher risk:

- [very high risk](#) (also called extremely vulnerable)
- [high risk](#)

There is different advice to protect people in each group.

What each group should do

Very high risk people	High risk people
Follow the advice on cocooning	Follow the advice on how to protect yourself from coronavirus

Very high risk groups (extremely vulnerable)

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for [cancer](#)
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, [Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency](#), [severe asthma](#), pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and [severe COPD](#)
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are [taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections](#) (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you're pregnant

What to do if you're at very high risk (extremely vulnerable)

If you are in a very high risk group, you need to cocoon.

[Read our guide on how to cocoon.](#)

High risk groups

The list of people in high risk groups includes people who:

- are over 60 years of age
- have a learning disability
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as [asthma](#), [COPD](#), emphysema or bronchitis)
- have [heart disease \(such as heart failure\)](#)
- have [high blood pressure \(hypertension\)](#)
- have [diabetes](#)
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a medical condition that can affect your breathing
- have cancer
- have a [weak immune system \(immunosuppressed\)](#)
- have cerebrovascular disease
- have a condition affecting your brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, or cerebral palsy)
- have a problem with your spleen or have had your spleen removed
- have a condition that means you have a high risk of getting infections (such as HIV, lupus or scleroderma)
- are [taking medicine that can affect your immune system \(such as low doses of steroids\)](#)
- have [obesity](#)
- are residents of nursing homes and other long-stay settings
- are in specialist disability care and are over 50 years of age or have an underlying health problem

What to do if you're at high risk

Take extra care to follow the advice on how to protect yourself from coronavirus.

This means:

- staying at home as much as possible
- [social distancing](#)
- [washing your hands regularly and properly](#)

You do not need to [self-isolate](#) unless you have [symptoms of coronavirus](#).

You should work from home if you are at high risk from coronavirus. If you cannot work from home and you have to go to your workplace, take extra care to:

- practice social distancing where possible
- wash your hands regularly and properly

Ask the people in your life to take extra care to [protect you from coronavirus](#).

If you develop a fever or any respiratory symptoms [contact your GP](#) or HSELive on [1850 24 1850](#).

Caring for someone at high risk from coronavirus

If you are caring for someone at a higher risk from coronavirus, it is very important you follow the [advice on how to protect yourself from coronavirus](#). Make sure they understand how important it is they protect themselves.

Smoking

Smoking may increase your risk of a more severe infection from coronavirus.

Smoking affects the immune system in the airways, lung tissue and throughout the body. This reduces your natural protection against infections, like coronavirus.

[Quit smoking during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Community support

Community support is available for people at higher risk from coronavirus. The support includes help with collecting:

- groceries
- medicines
- other essential items

[Changes have also been made to make it easier for you to get your medicines and prescriptions.](#)

[Read more about how Local Authorities can help you during the coronavirus outbreak.](#)

Pregnancy and coronavirus

The information we have so far shows that pregnant women or their babies are not at a higher risk of serious illness if they get coronavirus.

[Read more advice on pregnancy and coronavirus.](#)

Related topics

[How to get tested for coronavirus](#)

[Minding your mental health during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

[Exercise at home](#)