



Coronavirus and Chronic respiratory Conditions

Living with a lung condition – What can I do now?

Help and Advice from your Respiratory team



Photo by Robin Benzrihem on Unsplash

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Contact Details for the Respiratory Team

Tel 552331

We will check the answer machine twice daily and someone will call you back.

Email iownt.Pulmonary.Rehab@nhs.net

Section 1

Coronavirus

COVID-19 is short for **CO**rona**VI**rus **D**isease **2019**. The coronavirus infection can cause symptoms similar to flu:

- a new continuous cough – you have started coughing repeatedly
- high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- feeling short of breath

For most people the symptoms are mild but some will develop severe breathing problems and other complications. The evidence so far shows that the risk of severe symptoms is higher in people with weakened immune systems, older people and people with long-term conditions, including long-term lung conditions.

Everyone should do what they can do to stop Coronavirus spreading. It is particularly important for people who:-

- are 70 or over
- have a long-term lung condition
- are pregnant
- have a weakened immune system

This covers anyone who is offered a flu jab as an adult each year because they have a long-term respiratory disease, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis.

It is essential to continue to take sensible steps to reduce your risk of picking up infections by:-

- avoid unnecessary social contact
- try to keep at least 2 metres (3 steps) from other people in your home, particularly people over 70, or those with long-term health conditions
- ask friends, family and delivery services to deliver things like food shopping and medicines but leave them outside. Many local shops/ cafes and restaurants are now offering a delivery service
- sleep alone, if possible
- regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- drink plenty of water and take paracetamol to help with your symptoms

What is social shielding and who needs to do this?

Some people, including children, with long-term lung conditions who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus, are now advised to rigorously follow shielding measures to keep themselves safe.

The government has now published advice for people who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. We've had guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care about who is in this vulnerable group.

People with severe long-term lung conditions in this group include people with:

- all types of cystic fibrosis
- severe asthma
- severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- lung cancer and mesothelioma, who are having active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy
- severe bronchiectasis
- interstitial lung disease, including pulmonary fibrosis and sarcoidosis

People are also extremely vulnerable if they have multiple long-term health problems. This group will include people with any long-term lung condition which they are treated for (including asthma, COPD, lung cancer, bronchiectasis, pulmonary fibrosis and others who are offered an annual flu jab) who also have diabetes or heart disease.

This is because they are at very high risk of severe illness as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), and may need to be admitted to hospital.

For more detailed information go to <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/coronavirus/what-is-social-shielding>

Hygiene measures

It's important to keep your hands clean to stop the virus spreading. The virus can pass from hand to hand, and we touch our faces a lot. There are sensible hygiene measures you can follow to cut the risk.

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Always wash your hands when you get home or get into work.
- If you can't wash your hands with soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel.
- Avoid touching your face as this can transfer the virus from your hands to your mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and encourage other people around you to do the same.
- Cough into your elbow or the crook of your arm to reduce the spread of germs and throw away used tissues as soon as you can.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser if you cough or sneeze on them.
- Avoid touching things in public spaces as much as possible.
- Don't shake hands with other people.

Quit smoking

If you smoke, it's **vital to quit**. People who smoke are five times more likely to get flu and twice as likely to get pneumonia.

Quitting smoking is one of the best ways to protect yourself from viral infections, including coronavirus.

What if my symptoms flare up?

It's important that you know the signs of an exacerbation or flare-up in your condition and have a plan in place about what to do.

It may be tricky to work out whether new symptoms are due to COVID-19 or due to an exacerbation or flare-up of your condition. Typically, exacerbations of COPD and asthma are not associated with a high fever.

If you become unwell and there is a risk you might have COVID-19, stay at home for 7 days, and if others live with you, you and they should stay at home for 14 days. Signs of COVID-19 include a high temperature and a new continuous cough.

Follow your usual steps to manage an exacerbation or flare-up, including getting medical help if you need to.

Use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service if:

- you feel you can't cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse
- your symptoms do not get better after 7 days

It is important to follow advice from NHS 111 or your health care professional. But **if there is any doubt, stay at home for 7 days if you have symptoms**. Follow your flare-up plan and self-manage as you usually do if your symptoms flare-up.

Should I use a facemask?

We do not recommend using a facemask to protect yourself as there isn't enough evidence to show how effective they are. Also, for people living with a lung condition wearing a facemask can make breathing more difficult.

Section 2

Looking after your health and wellbeing

To help yourself stay well while you're at home:

- stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media
- try to keep yourself busy – you could try activities like cooking, reading, online learning and watching films
- do light exercise at home, or outside once a day

Help if you're feeling worried

- Some people with lung conditions are telling us that they feel very worried and anxious about coronavirus - It's normal to have these sorts of feelings at a time like this. While it is important to stay informed, there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during such times.
- The government is now advising us to avoid all but essential social contact. This will mean that more of us will be spending a lot of time at home and many of our regular social activities will no longer be available to us. It will help to try and see it as a different period of time in your life, and not necessarily a bad one, even if you didn't choose it.
- It will mean a different rhythm of life, a chance to be in touch with others in different ways than usual. Be in touch with other people regularly on social media, e-mail or on the phone, as they are still good ways of being close to the people who matter to you.
- Create a new daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself. You could try reading more or watching movies, having an exercise routine, trying new relaxation techniques, or finding new knowledge on the internet. Try and rest and view this as a new if unusual experience, that might have its benefits.
- You may like to focus on the things you can do if you feel able to:

stress management.

It's important to acknowledge these feelings and remind each other to look after our physical and mental health. We should also be aware of and avoid increasing habits that may not be helpful in the long term, like smoking and drinking

- keep active
- eat a balanced diet
- Follow the hygiene advice regarding hand washing

Friends and Family

At times of stress, we work better in company and with support. Try and keep in touch with your friends and family, by telephone, email or social media, or contact a

helpline for emotional support. If you are sharing information, use this from trusted sources, and remember that your friends might be worried too

The Media.

There is extensive news coverage about the outbreak. If you find that the news is causing you huge stress, it's important to find a balance. It's best that you don't avoid all news and that you keep informing and educating yourself, but limit your news intake if it is bothering you

For more advice, see:

Every Mind Matters: 10 tips to help if you are worried about coronavirus

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

Every Mind Matters: how to look after your mental wellbeing while staying at home

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

Resources on management of breathlessness:

- <https://www.stchristophers.org.uk/videos/managing-breathlessness/>
- <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/research/research-centres-and-groups/wolfson/breathlessness/aguide-to-living-well-with-breathlessness>

Exercise resources

Self-management Programme of Activity, Coping and Education (SPACE FOR COPD®)

- This is an online programme for individuals with COPD.
- It is a self-management programme designed to help individuals with COPD manage their condition more effectively and reduce the impact it has on their day to day life. The self management programme contains a range of educational topics to help an individual with COPD understand their condition better. Some of these topics include: information about medication, breathing control, exercise and nutritional advice. COPD individuals are also encouraged to set goals and progress through a prescribed exercise programme and achieve weekly targets.

- When doing the walking programme, please adhere to government guidelines on social distancing and exercise outdoors.
- Additional features of the self-management programme include a glossary, frequently asked questions, a moderated discussion forum to receive and answer questions from other individuals with COPD, an 'Ask the expert' facility which provides email access to a multiprofessional team of experts at Glenfield Hospital, and a news blog to obtain all the latest SPACE FOR COPD® news.
- The programme has been shown to improve anxiety, exercise performance, and disease knowledge

The pulmonary rehabilitation department at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust has kindly agreed to provide access to this service free of charge for three months.

- Register on: www.spaceforcopd.co.uk to start using the programme.

Home-exercise programme

Harefield Pulmonary Rehabilitation Unit home exercise programme:

- This booklet is designed to allow PR professionals to deliver a walking and strength training programme by telephone to home-bound patients with chronic respiratory disease.
- When doing the walking programme, please adhere to government guidelines on social distancing and exercise outdoors.
- A copy of the programme with an exercise prescription is given to the patient and the PR professional reviews and progresses the programme by telephone.
- It has been shown to improve breathlessness, exercise capacity and health-related quality of life in people with COPD

<https://brit-thoracic.org.uk/media/455108/harefield-home-ex-prog-booklet.doc>

British Lung Foundation: Active Steps

- The Stay active, stay well exercise videos give people with chronic lung disease everything to start exercising.
- They include step-by-step aerobic and strength exercises as well as how to warm up before you start, and cool down and stretch at the end.

- The programme has been designed for people living with a long-term lung condition, and includes exercises at 3 levels.
- There are also videos on managing breathlessness and goal setting
- Link: <https://www.blf.org.uk/exercise-video>

Life of Breath: Dance videos

- This group have uploaded seven dance videos which they hope will help people with breathlessness get moving to improve their health and wellbeing. Presented by dance facilitator, respiratory public health specialist and programme creator Sian Williams, the video series demonstrates a full session with a warm up, standing and seated dances, and a cool down.
- People with balance or coordination problems are advised to be cautious with any movements that may cause them to lose their balance or fall.
- Link: <https://lifeofbreath.org/2020/03/dance-easy-breathe-better-and-feel-good/>

Education resources

Harefield Pulmonary Rehabilitation Team's education booklet:

- This is a booklet given to all patients who attend PR at Harefield to support formal education sessions.
- It includes topics such as disease pathophysiology, management of breathlessness, dietary advice, anxiety management, loving relationships etc.

<https://brit-thoracic.org.uk/media/455109/harefield-pr-education-booklet.pdf>

Living well with COPD

- Self-management programme with ten modules: Being Healthy with COPD; Preventing Your Symptoms and Taking Your Medications; Managing your Breathing and Saving Your Energy; Managing Your Stress & Anxiety; Integrating a Plan of Action into Your Life; Keeping a Healthy and Fulfilling Lifestyle; Integrating an Exercise Program Into Your Life; Integrating long-term home Oxygen therapy into your life; Integrating a healthy diet into your life; Living Well Smoke Free.
- It has been shown that when the programme is implemented under the supervision of a healthcare professional, it can improve quality of life as well as reduce hospitalisations, A&E visits and unscheduled medical visits

- Link: <https://www.livingwellwithcopd.com/en/about.html>

Pulmonary Wellness website:

- Webinars on a variety of topics e.g. airway clearance, nutrition, medication, exercise:
- Link: <https://pulmonarywellness.org/webinars-by-topic/>

General resources

Video of guided relaxation

- <https://www.stchristophers.org.uk/video-exercise-relaxation/>

Nutrition resources for people with COPD:

- <https://www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/I-am-a-Person-with-COPD/Nutrition-forSomeone-with-COPD.aspx>

Patients with respiratory conditions (or ask a family member or friend) can access information from:

Public Health England - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

COVID-19 Symptom Tracker- <https://covid.joinzoe.com/>

App available to download on Android and Apple

Asthma Information provided by Asthma UK

British Lung Foundation Information for those with a lung condition

Cystic Fibrosis Information provided by the CF Trust

Mesothelioma Information for patients with Mesothelioma

Pulmonary Fibrosis Information from Action Pulmonary Fibrosis

SarcoidosisUK Information provided by SarcoidosisUK

Travel advice for patients Country-specific advice published by PHE

Tuberculosis Information from TB Alert

Disclaimer: Advice has been based on PHE advice where available and expert opinion where not available. Variations to this advice may be required depending on clinical setting and individual patients. This guidance is issued to specialist respiratory teams working in the community setting.

We Value Your Views On Our Service

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). If you wish to contact them directly, telephone 534850.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust
St Mary's Hospital
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 03000 61 61 61 or at enquiries@cqc.org.uk

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.