



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

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In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Special
COVID-19
Edition



COVID-19: Self-isolation Guide

Produced in partnership with Devon County Council

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Information Disclaimer

This guide has been prepared using advice from HM Government and was correct at the time of going to print and may change at short notice.

Editors & Designers

Grahame Flynn
Jennie Benham
Judy Pride

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Subscriptions

The magazine is FREE and available as a high quality, full colour, large print publication, digitally via email and in audio USB format.

To subscribe please call our Helpline.

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Chief Executive Officer's

Introduction



COVID-19 infection rates are very high and the Omicron variant is spreading rapidly.

It is important that we all take steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection in the community to save lives and protect the NHS.

This large print guide has been specifically created to support those people who are required to self-isolate at home. Due to the complexity of this document and the fact that Government guidance is changing rapidly we have not produced an audio version. **If you have difficulty reading this document and are required to self-isolate please ring the Helpline for support.**

Self-isolation can be challenging at the best of times but we know that it can be even more of an issue for people with little or no sight.

We will cover the ever changing guidance for self-isolation, the types of COVID-19 tests and how to order them and how to treat COVID at home.

It is our sincere hope that you never need this information but if you do we are here to keep you **informed**, keep you **connected** and keep you **safe**.

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Grahame

Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

Devon in Sight is registered with the Helplines Partnership

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Thursday

COVID-19 Self-isolation

“Self-isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have or might have coronavirus”

What is self-isolation?

Self-isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have or might have coronavirus (COVID-19).

It's a legal requirement to self-isolate if you are told to by NHS Test and Trace. You could be fined if you do not self-isolate.

When to self-isolate

Self-isolate straight away and get a **PCR Test** as soon as possible if you have any of these 3 symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

You should also self-isolate straight away if:

- you've tested positive for COVID-19 – this means you have the virus
- someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive (unless you are not required to self-isolate – check below if this applies to you)
- you've been told to self-isolate following contact with someone who tested positive.

How long to self-isolate

You are now able to end quarantine after seven days instead of ten days by providing negative lateral flow results on day six and day seven. **This could be reduced further in 2022.**

When you do not need to self-isolate

If you live with or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, you will not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- you're fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS
- you're under 18 years and 6 months old
- you're taking part or have taken part in an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Even if you do not have symptoms, you're strongly advised to:

- do daily rapid **Lateral Flow Tests** (1 a day for 7 days), if you're fully vaccinated, to protect yourself and others from COVID-19
- follow advice on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19
- consider limiting contact with people who are at higher risk from COVID-19
- someone you live with has symptoms but has not yet been tested or received their test result
- Household isolation will help to control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community and the most vulnerable.

There are different tests you can get to check if you have coronavirus (COVID-19). The test you need depends on why you're getting tested.

The 2 main tests are:

PCR Tests – mainly for people with symptoms, they're sent to a lab to be checked.

Rapid Lateral Flow Tests – only for people who do not have symptoms, they give a quick result using a device similar to a pregnancy test. Both tests are free.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19

Self-isolate straight away and get a **PCR Test** as soon as possible if you have any of these 3 symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

The test usually involves taking a sample from your throat and nose, or from your nose only, using a swab. PCR tests are the most reliable COVID-19 tests. It takes some time to get the results because they are usually processed in a laboratory.

Ordering a PCR Test

Call the NHS free from your mobile or landline on 119 Lines are open every day, 7am and 11pm. If you have internet access you can order your tests online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Important: Stay at home until you get your test result.

If you do not have symptoms

- About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others.
- **Rapid Lateral Flow Tests** help to check if someone has COVID-19. If people test positive and self-isolate, it helps stop the virus spreading.
- Research shows rapid tests are a reliable test for COVID-19. They give a quick result and do not need to be sent to a lab.
- Even if you're vaccinated, you could still catch the virus or pass it on. Doing rapid tests helps to protect yourself and others.
- The test usually involves taking a sample from your throat and nose, or from your nose only, using a swab. You get a result in 15 to 30 minutes depending on the type of rapid lateral flow test you've taken.

Ordering Rapid Lateral Flow Tests

Please call the NHS free from your mobile or landline on 119 Lines are open every day, 7am and 11pm.

If you have internet access you can order your tests online at www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

Reducing the spread of COVID at home if someone is infected

“Coronavirus remains a serious health risk”

Things you can do to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your household, if someone is infected

Stay as far away from other members of your household as possible. Wherever possible, avoid using shared spaces such as kitchens and other living areas while others are present and take your meals back to your room to eat. Wear a face covering or a surgical mask when spending time in shared areas inside your home.

Take exercise within your home, garden or private outdoor space. Follow the general advice to reduce the spread of the infection within your household.

It may be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others in their household. Not all these measures will be possible if you are living with children or have caring responsibilities but follow this guidance to the best of your ability in these circumstances.

Wash your hands

This is an important way to reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 or passing it on to others. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose and before you eat or handle food. Clean your hands frequently and avoid touching your face. Try not to share towels.

Cover coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.

Dispose of tissues into a rubbish bag and immediately wash your hands. If you have a carer, they should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after you have sneezed or coughed and then wash or sanitise their hands.

Clean your home to reduce spread of infection

Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles and remote controls, and shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Use standard household cleaning products like detergents and bleach to clean your home as these are very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Clean shared bathrooms each time they are used, especially the surfaces you have touched, using your usual bathroom cleaning products.

Visitors to your household

Do not invite or allow social visitors to enter your home, including friends and family. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone, email or social media.

If you or a family member receive essential care in your home, carers should continue to visit and follow the provision of home care guidance to reduce the risk of infection.

All non-essential in-house services and repairs should be postponed until the self-isolation period is completed. Delivery drivers should not come into your home, so make sure you ask them to leave items outside for collection.

Treating COVID-19 at home

“Coronavirus remains a serious health risk”

Most people with coronavirus (COVID-19) feel better within a few weeks. You may be able to look after yourself at home while you recover.

While you're ill, ask a friend, family member or neighbour to check up on you. Arrange a regular call or talk through a doorway (not face to face) so they can check how you're doing.

Treating a high temperature

If you have a high temperature, it can help to:

- get lots of rest
- drink plenty of fluids (water is best) to avoid dehydration – drink enough so your pee is light yellow and clear
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you feel uncomfortable

Treating a cough

- If you have a cough, it's best to avoid lying on your back. Lie on your side or sit upright instead.
- To help ease a cough, try having a teaspoon of honey. But do not give honey to babies under 12 months.
- If this does not help, you could contact a pharmacist for advice about cough treatments.

Important: Do not go to a pharmacy

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, stay at home.

Try calling or contacting the pharmacy online instead.

Get help while you're staying at home

NHS Volunteer Responders can help you while you have to stay at home (self-isolate). They can help with things like collecting shopping and medicines.

Call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm, everyday) to arrange help from a volunteer. **See page 14.**

Things to try if you're feeling breathless

If you're feeling breathless, it can help to keep your room cool.

Try turning the heating down or opening a window. Do not use a fan as it may spread the virus.

You could also try:

- breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, with your lips together like you're gently blowing out a candle
- sitting upright in a chair
- relaxing your shoulders, so you're not hunched
- leaning forward slightly – support yourself by putting your hands on your knees or on something stable like a chair
- Try not to panic if you're feeling breathless. This can make it worse.

For advice call the NHS on 111, or ring your GP

Emergency call 999

The NHS 111 Service and the Emergency Services are available 24/7

When to get medical help

“Coronavirus remains a serious health risk”



Most people with COVID-19 will experience a mild illness. Seek prompt medical attention if your illness or the illness of someone in your household is worsening.

Get advice from NHS 111 or a GP if:

- you're feeling gradually more unwell or more breathless
- you have difficulty breathing when you stand up or move around
- you feel very weak, achy or tired
- you're shaking or shivering
- you've lost your appetite

- you're unable to care for yourself – for example, tasks like washing and dressing or making food are too difficult
- you still feel unwell after 4 weeks – this may be long COVID

Go to A&E immediately or call 999 if:

- you're so breathless that you're unable to say short sentences when resting
- your breathing has got suddenly worse
- you cough up blood
- you feel cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin
- you have a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin and does not fade when you roll a glass over it
- you collapse or faint
- you feel agitated, confused or very drowsy
- you've stopped peeing or are peeing much less than usual.

For advice call the NHS on 111, or ring your GP

Emergency call 999

The NHS 111 Service and the Emergency Services are available 24/7

Getting help whilst Self-isolating at home



How do I get volunteer support?

Help is available from NHS Volunteer Responders during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Am I eligible?

You're eligible to receive supporting services for support from NHS Volunteer Responders if:

- You are self-isolating because you have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19) or have symptoms, or you've been in contact with someone who has.
- You have been instructed to self-isolate by the Test and Trace Service, because you've been near someone infected.
- You are self-isolating ahead of planned hospital care.
- You have been instructed to self-isolate following entry into the country.
- You have ever been advised to shield by a health professional.
- You are vulnerable for another reason, (for instance, due to disability, pregnancy, aged over 70, you have a long-term condition such as Parkinson's or epilepsy, or are vulnerable due to a mental health condition).
- You have caring responsibilities.

What help is available?

NHS Volunteer Responders can help you with various day-to-day tasks that might have become more difficult during the pandemic including...

Help with grocery shopping and other essentials

Once help has been requested, a volunteer will contact you by phone. You'll be able to talk through your shopping list and arrange how you'll pay. There are a number of payment options open to you.

Help with prescription collections

If you're self-isolating or avoiding busier places, you can arrange for your prescriptions to be picked up by NHS volunteers from your pharmacy of choice. Volunteers have been provided with full guidance on transporting medicines.

Check In and Chat phone calls

Self-isolating or limiting contact with others can be tough going, so it's important to talk regularly to other people while you're at home. NHS Volunteer Responders are on hand for a friendly chat and they will be delighted to book you in for a call.

You can schedule a one-off call or a regular check-in.

To register for support from the NHS Volunteer Responders Programme please...

Phone 0808 196 3646

The NHS Helpline is open between 8am and 8pm (7 Days a week)

Looking after yourself at home

“Coronavirus remains a serious health risk”

Staying at home and self-isolating for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you do not have much space or access to a garden.

Remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and get support if you need it.

Talk to people

- Call a friend or family member, they may need to talk too.
- If you would like to have a chat with others living with sight loss, join the free Devon in Sight weekly Chit-Chat Calls every Wednesday at 10.30am on **0808 169 7930**. We'll talk about anything and everything! **See page 18**.
- If you're feeling really low, call us on **01392 876 666** and we can refer you to our Emotional Support Service.
- Register for a telephone befriender with the Macular Society by calling **0300 30 30 111**
- You can access the FREE Living Options Devon 'Time to Talk Service' on **0300 303 3691**.

Keep active

- Even a small amount of physical activity will keep you fitter and more motivated during self-isolation and the cold winter months.
- Walk around your home as often as you can and if you are sitting for a long time, stand up at least every hour.
- Get outside whenever possible or stand at an open door to get fresh air and some natural light. Day light will boost your vitamin D levels.

Add more light

- Turn on your lights as soon as it starts to get dark. A low level of light will add to your chances of a trip or fall.
- Use task lights to help with cooking, reading and hobbies for example. You can call us on the Helpline for more advice on lighting.

Eat well

- If cooking is difficult, there are several companies that will deliver ready meals including Wiltshire Farm Foods and Oakhouse Meals.

Keep warm

- Keep your home no lower than 18 degrees Celsius, even at night in your bedroom.
- A microwaveable Hot Water bottle can add extra warmth without the risk of scalds from hot water.
- Draw curtains to keep the cold out from large windows.
- Layers of clothes are better than one thick jumper.
- Keep a cosy blanket or fleece (which are really light) near your chair as sitting down for any length of time will reduce your temperature.

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Telephone Chit-Chat Calls

Meet up call

New
Service
for 2022



▲ Judy Pride

In January 2022 Devon in Sight started a new weekly telephone based service every Wednesday, hosted by Judy Pride.

Chit-Chat Calls are a great opportunity for you to air your thoughts, concerns, ideas and to share your recent stories in a safe space.

We will be able to share news about the Devon in Sight and its ongoing development and check that you have a clear understanding of the latest COVID-19 restrictions.

This service is free from your home telephone but calls from mobiles are charged at the standard network tariff. We won't be recording these calls and we will protect your identity during the call.

To join a telephone Chit-Chat Call choose the date that you would like to join from the programme below. A couple of minutes before the start time dial the number below. All chats start promptly at 10.30am and will conclude at 11.30am.

Freephone 0808 169 79 30

We will be piloting the service for the next three months on the following dates.

Wednesday 5 January 2022	Wednesday 23 February 2022
Wednesday 12 January 2022	Wednesday 2 March 2022
Wednesday 19 January 2022	Wednesday 9 March 2022
Wednesday 26 January 2022	Wednesday 16 March 2022
Wednesday 2 February 2022	Wednesday 23 March 2022
Wednesday 9 February 2022	Wednesday 30 March 2022
Wednesday 16 February 2022	

If you have difficulty dialling out on your phone please give us a call in advance of the meeting as we can set up the system to call you automatically at home.

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Thursday

Articles for the Blind

Return Address: Devon in Sight
Splatford Barton, Splatford, Kennford
Exeter, EX6 7XY



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01392 876 666

enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk
www.devoninsight.org.uk

Devon in Sight
Splatford Barton, Kennford,
Exeter, EX6 7XY.

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