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Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK

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Self-isolate when you travel to the UK

If you arrive in the UK on or after 8 June 2020, you will not be allowed to leave the place you're staying for the first 14 days you're in the UK (known as 'self-isolating').

This is because it can take up to 14 days for coronavirus symptoms to appear.

Before you travel, you should provide your journey, contact details and the address where you will self-isolate. You will be able to complete the public health passenger locator form (https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk) 48 hours before you arrive. You must present these details on your arrival in England.

You will need to do these things if you arrive on or after 8 June 2020. If you arrive before 8 June or have just arrived in the UK you should check the latest public health advice on coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) before you travel.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel and you should not travel if you have the (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/)symptoms of coronavirus. (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/)

> **You may be refused permission to enter the UK (if you are not a British citizen), or fined if you do not to provide your contact details or do not self-isolate when you arrive in the UK on or after 8 June 2020.**

In England, if you do not self-isolate, you can be fined £1,000. If you do not provide an accurate contact detail declaration – or do not update your contact detail form in the limited circumstances where you need to move to another place to self-isolate – you can be fined up to £3,200.

Who must self-isolate

These rules are for UK residents and all visitors coming into the UK.

You will not need to self-isolate for 14 days if you're travelling to the UK from within the Common Travel Area, that is:

- the UK
- the Republic of Ireland
- the Channel Islands
- the Isle of Man

However, if you arrive in the UK and have been outside the Common Travel Area within the last 14 days, then you will need to self-isolate for the remainder of the 14-day period, starting from when you arrived in the Common Travel Area.

You will also need to complete a public health passenger locator form (https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk) if you are travelling from the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man and have been outside the Common Travel Area in the last 14 days.

There are other reasons why you might not need to self-isolate. Read the detailed guidance on who does not need to self-isolate (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules).

If you are exempt, you will still need to stay alert and stay safe (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing).

If you are travelling to the UK for less than 14 days, you will be expected to self-isolate for the length of your stay.

Why self-isolating is important

When you arrive in the UK, it is very important that you stay in your accommodation for 14 days. It can take up to 14 days for you to develop coronavirus symptoms after you catch the virus and in this time you can unknowingly pass it on to others, even if you don't have symptoms.

Self-isolating will reduce the chance of a second wave of coronavirus in the UK and help prevent family, friends and the community from contracting coronavirus, as well as helping to protect the NHS.

How to travel to the place where you are self-isolating

If you develop coronavirus symptoms when you're travelling to the UK, you should tell the crew or driver on your plane, boat, train or bus. They'll let staff in the airport, port or station know, so they can tell you what you should do next when you arrive.

When you arrive in the UK, go straight to the place you're staying.

Only use public transport if you have no other option. If you do use public transport, wear something that covers your nose and mouth and stay 2 metres apart from other people. Pack a face covering (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering) or scarf to cover your nose and mouth before you travel. If you have coronavirus symptoms, you will not be allowed to travel by public transport and will need to demonstrate that the accommodation where you will self-isolate is safe.

If necessary, and you have a long journey within the UK to arrive at your self-isolation accommodation, you can stop overnight in safe accommodation before continuing your journey. You must self-isolate and provide the address of your overnight stop on your public health passenger locator form.

How to self-isolate in your accommodation

You should self-isolate in one place for the full 14 days, where you can have food and other necessities delivered, and stay away from others (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing). You must self-isolate at the address you provided on the public health passenger locator form.

This can include:

- your own home
- staying with friends or family
- a hotel or other temporary accommodation

You should not have visitors, including friends and family, unless they are providing essential care (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care).The only friends and family who you can have contact with are those who travelled with you or people who you are staying with.

You cannot go out to work or school or visit public areas. You should not go shopping. If you require help buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, you should ask friends or relatives or order a delivery.

In England, you must only exercise within your home or garden. You cannot leave your home to walk your dog. You will need to ask friends or relatives to help you with this.

NHS Volunteer Responders are also available if you need help collecting shopping, medication or would like a telephone 'check-in and chat'. Call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm) to arrange volunteer support. You can arrange one-off support, or schedule more regular help whilst you are self-isolating.

In England, you can only leave your accommodation in limited circumstances. These include where:

- you need urgent medical assistance (or where your doctor has advised you to get medical assistance)
- you need access to basic necessities like food and medicines, but only in exceptional circumstances such as where you cannot arrange for these to be delivered
- you need to access critical public services such as social services and victim support services, but only in exceptional circumstances
- you need to go to the funeral (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic) of a close relative
- you need to fulfil a legal obligation such as participate in legal proceedings
- there's an emergency

You are not allowed to change the place where you are self-isolating except in very limited circumstances, including where:

- a legal obligation requires you to change address, such as where you are a child whose parents live separately, and you need to move between homes as part of a shared custody agreement
- it is necessary for you to stay overnight at accommodation before travelling to the place where you will be self-isolating for the remainder of the 14 days
- there's an emergency

If this happens, you should provide full details of each address where you will self-isolate on the public health passenger locator form (https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk). If, in an exceptional circumstance, you cannot remain where you are staying, you must update the form as soon as possible.

Support to help you self-isolate in your own accommodation

The people you're staying with do not need to self-isolate, unless they travelled with you or you develop the symptoms of coronavirus.

If you cannot safely self-isolate for 14 days, you should tell Border Force Officers when you pass through UK border controls. They will provide you with details of a booking service which you can use to obtain accommodation and self-isolate in at your own expense. Staying at home may be difficult, frustrating or lonely, but there are things that you can do to help make it easier (https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/).

NHS Volunteer Responders are also on hand to have a friendly chat. If you would like a telephone 'check in and chat' please call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm) to arrange volunteer support.

Within your accommodation

The people you're staying with do not need to stay at home, unless they travelled with you. Avoid contact with them and minimise the time you spend in shared spaces, like kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas.

If you're staying in a hotel or guest house, you must stay away from others who didn't travel with you, so it's important that you don't use shared areas such as bars, restaurants, health clubs and sports facilities. Stay 2 metres apart from other people staying there at all times.

It is important to avoid contact with other people in your home in order to reduce the risk of transmitting coronavirus. You should stay in a well-ventilated room with a window to the outside that can be opened, separate from other people in your home.

If you can, you should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. If you have to share these facilities, regular cleaning will be required after each person has used them. Make sure you use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying yourself after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

Washing your hands and keeping good hygiene

Everyone should wash their hands regularly, but this is particularly important for people who have recently travelled to the UK because you could have contracted coronavirus and not yet developed symptoms. Wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water, for at least 20 seconds, rinse and dry thoroughly. Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of tissues into a plastic waste bag, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, rinse and dry thoroughly.

After self-isolating for 14 days

If you do not have any coronavirus symptoms after 14 days, you can stop self-isolating. You will then need to follow the same rules as people who live in the UK. Check the rules for the part of the UK you're staying in:

- England (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing)
- Scotland (https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- Wales (https://gov.wales/staying-home-and-away-others-guidance)
- Northern Ireland (https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-home-and-self-isolation)

What to do if you get coronavirus symptoms

You should look for any of the following symptoms in the 14 days after the day you arrive in the UK:

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

If you have any of these symptoms, you should continue to self-isolate at home. If you are staying with others and you develop symptoms, the whole household that you are staying with will need to begin self-isolating. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)
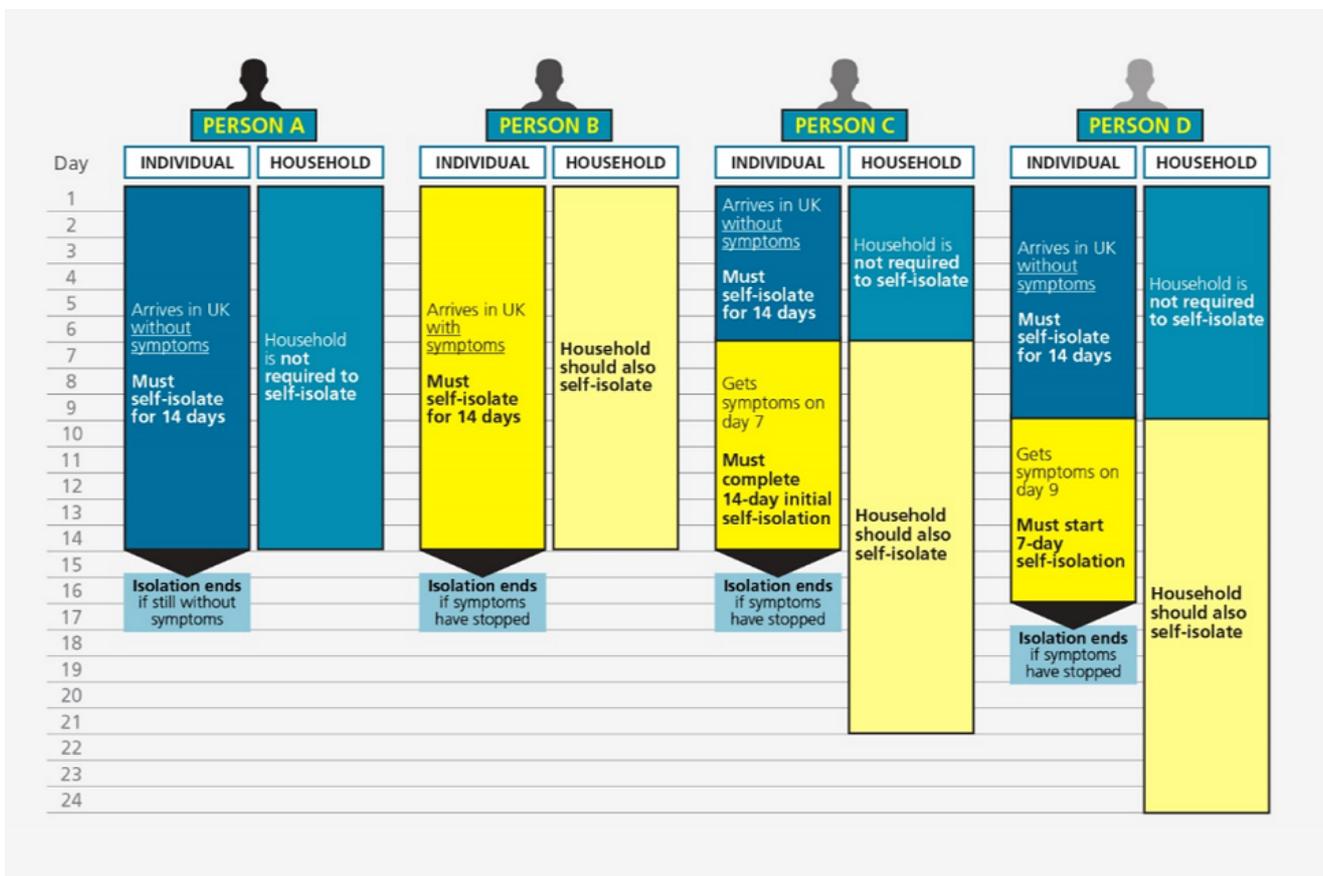
You should apply for a test if you have the symptoms of coronavirus, or live with someone who has the symptoms of coronavirus. You can register for a test on the NHS website (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 119 to arrange for a test.

If your test for coronavirus is positive you will be asked to share your contacts with the NHS test and trace service (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works), and your contact detail declaration may be used to alert people who travelled to the UK alongside you.

If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then use the NHS 111 online (https://111.nhs.uk/) coronavirus (COVID-19) service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

If you develop symptoms, you must self-isolate for at least 14 days from the point you arrived in the UK and if you get symptoms during that time for at least 7 days from symptom onset and until you are better and no longer have a high temperature. You will need to self-isolate for 14 days from the time that you arrived in the UK even if you have had and recovered from coronavirus symptoms in this time. If you are tested and receive a negative result for coronavirus, you must continue to self-isolate until you have been in the UK for 14 days, even if your symptoms have gone.

If you arrived in the UK more than 14 days ago, you do not need to continue self-isolation once you have had symptoms for 7 days and your temperature has returned to normal. Symptoms of a cough or changes to your sense of smell or taste can last for several weeks after the infection has gone and so you can stop self-isolating even if you have these symptoms. The household you are staying with should self-isolate for 14 days from the point that your symptoms start.

Figure: Self-isolation timelines for Person A, Person B, Person C and Person D, showing INDIVIDUAL and HOUSEHOLD isolation periods over 24 days.

PERSON A
- INDIVIDUAL: Arrives in UK without symptoms. Must self-isolate for 14 days. Isolation ends if still without symptoms.
- HOUSEHOLD: Household is not required to self-isolate.

PERSON B
- INDIVIDUAL: Arrives in UK with symptoms. Must self-isolate for 14 days. Isolation ends if symptoms have stopped.
- HOUSEHOLD: Household should also self-isolate.

PERSON C
- INDIVIDUAL: Arrives in UK without symptoms. Must self-isolate for 14 days. Gets symptoms on day 7. Must complete 14-day initial self-isolation. Isolation ends if symptoms have stopped.
- HOUSEHOLD: Household is not required to self-isolate. Household should also self-isolate.

PERSON D
- INDIVIDUAL: Arrives in UK without symptoms. Must self-isolate for 14 days. Gets symptoms on day 9. Must start 7-day self-isolation. Isolation ends if symptoms have stopped.
- HOUSEHOLD: Household is not required to self-isolate. Household should also self-isolate.

If you develop new symptoms or your existing symptoms worsen within your 14-day isolation period, then please contact NHS 111 again and follow their advice.

Exemptions

A small proportion of people travelling to the UK to maintain essential supply chains, critical national infrastructure or to contribute to crisis response or other essential government work will not need to self-isolate or complete contact detail declarations. If you are a seasonal agricultural worker (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coming-to-the-uk-for-seasonal-agricultural-work-on-english-farms), you must remain on the farm where you are working and staying for 14 days.

Read the list of exemptions to self-isolation requirements (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules).

Like everyone in the UK, if you are exempt you should not travel and should immediately self-isolate if you get the symptoms of coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection). You should follow guidance to stay alert (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing) and work safely (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19).