

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Information for people over 65 or those with underlying medical conditions

COVID-19 is a new virus and can cause pneumonia in some people. It also means that there is no resistance in our population. It seems that those who are older or have underlying health conditions are more vulnerable to the complications of infection with this virus.

People falling into the 'extremely vulnerable' group include:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer;
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment;
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer;
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors;
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

The symptoms that you should be aware of are:

- **a high temperature** - you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- **a new, continuous cough** - coughing a lot for more than an hour, or more than three coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than normal);
- **shortness of breath.**

Strict new measures came into force in the Bailiwick from Wednesday 25 March, and as a result we ask that you do not leave your house, unless it is essential. This is to protect yourself, but also other members of the community. When we remove our day-to-day contact with other people, we reduce the spread of the infection.

Health & Social Care services are continuing to provide essential and critical to life services for the most vulnerable people living at home. If you receive any services, there may be a need to make some changes to this, but you will be contacted directly if this is the case. If you have been told by a health professional to self-isolate, please inform the service so that they can plan their support appropriately. All new referrals will continue to be screened and prioritised. Training sessions are underway to up skill staff in moving and handling and infection control.

We would also ask that, wherever possible, you don't go out to collect food or medicines. Friends, relatives or volunteers can collect these items for you and leave them on your doorstep. Alternatively you can speak to your pharmacy directly.

There are a number of companies that are offering home delivery services and these include:

Business	Contact Number
Co-op	01481 231155
Forest Stores	01481 238737
Manor Farm Foods	01481 727590
Milton Produce	01481 239666

In addition, there are a number of willing and able volunteers that are happy to help wherever possible. These details are available in the Guernsey Press, which costs 80p but can be delivered to your home free of charge. For more information, please call 01481 240240.

We would encourage you to transfer funds electronically wherever possible.

We appreciate that this will be a difficult time for you and may well mean no face to face contact with family members or friends. If possible, we would encourage you to make contact by phone or e-mail. Please don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it.

Volunteers from both St Johns and Carers Guernsey are linking up to provide a telephone scheme to help those who live alone or feel lonely during pandemic. Talking to someone about your day can make all the difference with how you are feeling. These Caring Callers are not health experts, but are members of the community who are happy to have a chat. You can get in touch with them by calling 01481 720088 or by emailing caring.caller@stjohn.gg.

There are also Social Prescribing Link Workers who can support people to identify their needs and connect people to community groups and agencies for practical, social and emotional support. Please contact Public Health Services on 01481 707311 for more details.

Keeping active when at home for long periods of time, especially when out of our normal routine, is so important for our mental and physical health. The Health Improvement Commission has compiled some resources to help you keep moving, and these can be found online at <https://healthimprovement.gg/services/be-active/be-active-home>. Please only do

these activities if you feel well and they should not replace guidance given for any medical condition.

If you are able to, you can get some fresh air and exercise outside but you must remain two metres away from others in order to maintain social distancing. It is also important that this is only done with members of your household and if possible, you should choose a quieter spot to go to.

Muscle mass can be lost and fat mass gained if we don't stay active, and therefore, we need to pay extra attention to what we eat. The Clinical Dietitian has some advice for you.

- 1. Add some protein into every meal.**
- 2. Take vitamin D3 supplements in winter.**
- 3. Don't forget your Vitamin C.**
- 4. Power your immune system with fibre.**

More advice can be found online at www.gov.gg/coronavirus.

If you do feel stressed or anxious then talking to friends and family on the phone can help but if you need to speak to someone you can contact MIND on 01481 722959 if you need support.

Although you are staying in the comfort of your own home, there are still measures you can take to help prevent you from catching the virus:

- **Hand washing regularly** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing through Happy Birthday twice!);
- **Avoid touching your mouth or face;**
- **If you smoke, consider stopping.** Quitline can offer advice and guidance on 01481 233170;
- **Follow the Catch it, Kill it, Bin it plan.** Keep tissues with you to catch a cough or sneeze, disposing of them in a waste bin and then killing any remaining germs by washing your hands.

However, if you do start to experience any symptoms, no matter how mild, please contact the Clinical Helpline by emailing publichealth@gov.gg or calling 01481 756932 or 01481 756969. The helpline is there to give you advice seven days a week between 8am and 10pm. It is important that you tell them about your travel history when you contact them.

If you feel very unwell, phone 999 and tell the operator of your symptoms and travel history. Please do not visit your GP or the Emergency Department at the hospital unannounced.