

When to self-isolate and what to do: a guide for staff

What is self-isolation?

Self-isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have, or might have, coronavirus. Self-isolation helps stop the virus spreading to other people.

When should I self-isolate?

You've tested positive for coronavirus	Self-isolate for 10 days
You have any symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)	Self-isolate for 10 days
You live with someone who has symptoms or who has tested positive	Self-isolate for 14 days
Someone in your support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive	Self-isolate for 14 days
You're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app	Self-isolate for 14 days
You arrive in the UK from a country with a high coronavirus risk	Self-isolate for 14 days

How do I self-isolate?

- Do not go to work, school or public places – work from home if you can
- Do not go on public transport or use taxis
- Do not go out to get food and medicine – order it online or by phone, or ask someone to bring it to your home
- Do not have visitors in your home, including friends and family
- Do not go out to exercise – exercise at home or in your garden, if you have one
- The government has made it clear that you must not attend a workplace during your time of self-isolation. Managers must ensure that this rule is followed and that no employee is permitted to return to a workplace until their self-isolation period is completed.

What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms.

How do I tell the difference between coronavirus and cold or flu?

They're very similar in some ways – and very different in others. For example, a runny nose is not coronavirus. Nor are symptoms such as aches and pains, or sneezing. Here's a quick checklist to help you:

Know Your Symptoms

COVID

High temperature
Persistent cough
Loss of taste or smell

Cold

Sneezing
Aches and pains
Running or stuffy nose
Sore throat

Flu

High temperature
Fatigue
Dry cough
Aches and pains
Headaches

Allergies

Sneezing
Coughing
Itchy eyes
Running or stuffy nose

- For more information about self-isolation, and the help and support available while staying at home, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do>