

## Home monitoring advice FOR ADULTS WITH COVID-19

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This is a guide to the common symptoms of Covid19, the steps you can take to care for someone who is ill and when to call for extra help. It is good to get prepared with some basic medical information on how to self-monitor, or monitor a household member who you suspect has Covid19.

The following advice relates to adults only.



### COVID-19 symptoms

- High fever and cough and later on you can get breathless (feeling your chest is tight or its difficult to breathe).
- Alongside the fever and “a new” cough
- Sore dry throat
- Headache
- Aching limbs.

Most patients report the hardest symptoms to cope with are the fever and cough which can be incessant (lasting up to an hour at a time) or three or more episodes of cough in 24 hours. The cough can last up to three weeks.

## What are the rules around isolation if we become ill?

The current advice (27<sup>th</sup> March 2020)

- If you live alone and develop symptoms you must stay indoors and not leave the house for 7 days.
- If your symptoms of fever last longer than 7 days then you must continue to self-isolate and call NHS 111.
- If you live with someone who develops symptoms of COVID-19, every household member must isolate completely (not leave the house) for 2 weeks from the day the individual developed their symptoms.

## How do I care for my household member who is unwell with COVID-19?

- The advice is to try to isolate them as much as possible within the home and where possible, do not share a bathroom with them, or a bedroom.
- Keep the home well ventilated.
- Allocate them their own towel, bedding etc and do not share it with other members of the home.
- Disinfect the home as much as possible
- Wash your hands and encourage them to wash their hands regularly and use antiseptic hand gel.

Use tissues to catch coughs and sneezes. Discard them into a designated bin, put it into another bin bag, tie it and wait 3 days before discarding it in the general waste.



## How do I look after a household member who is unwell?



What is a high temperature?

A temperature is considered raised if over 37.8 C.

A very high temperature in an adult is 39.4 C or higher

How do I treat their symptoms?

- Water intake is really important when someone is unwell with fever.

Try to monitor this by keeping note of how much they are drinking (at least 2 large bottles of water per day).

- Paracetamol 2 tablets four times a day can help with symptoms of fever and pain.

## How do I monitor someone at home who is unwell?

### Monitor their temperature

- Take a temperature at least twice per day and write it down in a diary
- If it goes to 39.4 C or above ring NHS 111 or if they seem to be getting more and more unwell call 999.

### Ask them to measure their heart rate

The normal resting heart rate in an adult is between 60 – 100 beats per minute.

### How does a person measure their heart rate?

Set a timer for one minute and count how many beats you feel

## How do I find my pulse?

To find your pulse in your wrist:

- hold out one of your hands, with your palm facing upwards
- press the first (index) finger and middle finger of your other hand on the inside of your wrist, at the base of your thumb – don't use your thumb as it has its own pulse
- press your skin lightly until you can feel your pulse – if you can't find it, try pressing a little harder or move your fingers around

To find your pulse in your neck:

- press your first finger and middle finger to the side of your neck, just under your jaw and beside your windpipe – don't use your thumb
- press your skin lightly to feel your pulse – if you can't find it, try pressing a bit harder or move your fingers around

## When to get more help

A raised heart rate is common with fever.

If the person's heart rate is greater than 100 then try to get them to take some paracetamol and ask them to drink more water.

If it doesn't come down below 100 soon after then it is time to call 111.

## Check their breathing (try to do this from a distance)

Ask yourself are they able to talk in complete sentences.

If they have to pause to take a breath in order to complete a sentence, then call 111.

## How do I measure a person's breathing and tell if it is normal or not?

Ask the person to sit up.

To calculate the breathing rate you must count how many breaths you are taking in every minute.

- Set a timer for 60 seconds Look at the chest rise and fall. One rise and one fall are counted as 1 breath.
- Listen to the breaths are there any additional sounds like rasping or wheezing?
- If they are breathing over 20 breaths per minute or making any added breathing sounds then you should call 111.
- If they are struggling with their breathing you should call 999.
- Any less than 12 breaths per minute and you again should call 111 or 999.
- Keep them sat upright until help arrives.

## Monitor their urine

Urine can indicate that a person is getting dehydrated.

- Urine should be straw-coloured.
- Ask the person if they are urinating and if the urine looks normal or dark.
- Dark urine or reduced urination is normally a sign that they are not drinking enough. Encourage them to drink more.
- If the person's urine is becoming very dark or not urinating for more than 8 hours then call NHS 111, or 999 if they appear to be getting more unwell.

## Common signs dehydration are

- Dry cracked lips
- Feeling dizzy or drowsy
- Getting lightheaded when standing up
- Urine is dark or they are not urinating for 8 hours or more
- Lethargy
- Rapid heart rate
- Rapid breathing

Call NHS 111 if you are worried they may show any of the signs of dehydration

# Summary

To help guide you on how to assess your household member who has become unwell, consider the following

- Are they managing to cope with their symptoms or are they becoming more and more unwell?
- Can they talk in full sentences?
- Is their breathing rate normal?
- Does their breathing sound normal, can you hear a wheeze?
- Is their heart rate normal?
- Are they becoming dehydrated?

	Reduced or abnormal	Normal	Raised or abnormal
Heart rate	Less than 60	60 – 100 beats per minute	100 or more beats per minute
Breathing rate	Less than 12 breaths in per minute	12 – 20	20 or more
Urine	No urine in 8 hours No urine	Every 2-4 hours and straw coloured	Dark urine

If you are worried about any of the above then call NHS 111 for advice.

# Medication to store at home in case a member of the household becomes unwell

- Paracetamol (1g or two tablets of 500mg, four times in a 24 hour period)
- Cough medicine (careful as this can contain paracetamol too)- codeine linctus can be helpful in treating an irritable cough (if you can find any)!
- Dioralyte sachets (for re-hydration)
- Ventolin if they are asthmatic – ask your GP to prescribe an extra inhaler if they ordinarily have one



## Items to keep at home:

- Antiseptic hand gel AND cleaning products
- A fan – can help with feeling breathless and can help cool a person down
- Thermometer
- Pulse oximeter- this is a little device you can put on your finger to measure Heart Rate and Oxygen saturation.

The Government Guidelines for households with possible Covid19 infections can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

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