



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Health advice for people with asthma

Current on: Wednesday 18th March

Last updated on: Tuesday 17th March

On this page:

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) health advice for people with asthma](#)
- [How to reduce the risk](#)
- [Make sure you can get what you need](#)
- [If you have severe asthma](#)
- [What to do if your asthma is getting worse](#)
- [Help if you're feeling anxious](#)

The coronavirus outbreak is a rapidly developing situation and the most up-to-date

information for people in the UK can be found [on the NHS website](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) health advice for people with asthma

When people with asthma get respiratory infections, it can set off their asthma symptoms.

To reduce your risk of asthma symptoms, the best action you can take is to follow these simple asthma management steps:

- **Keep taking your preventer inhaler daily as prescribed.** This will help cut your risk of an asthma attack being triggered by any respiratory virus, including coronavirus.
- **Carry your reliever inhaler** (usually blue) with you every day, in case you feel your asthma symptoms flaring up.
- [Download and use an asthma action plan](#) to help you recognise and manage asthma symptoms when they come on.
- Start a [peak flow diary](#), if you have a peak flow meter. If you don't have a peak flow meter, think about getting one from your GP or pharmacist, as it can be a good way of tracking your asthma and helping to tell the difference between asthma symptoms and COVID-19 symptoms. It can also help your medical team to assess you over the phone or video.
- If you come down with flu, a cold, or any other respiratory infection, follow our tips for [looking after your asthma when you're not well](#).
- If you smoke it's vital to quit now as smoking will increase your risk from COVID-19. There's NHS advice on how to give up smoking [here](#).

How to reduce the risk

The Government has now advised that everyone start to reduce the amount of contact they have with others. This is called "social distancing" and it helps cut down the spread of the virus.

[If you have asthma and have no symptoms of COVID-19:](#)

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.
- Use tissues to wipe your nose or catch a sneeze, and then put them in the bin

straight away.

- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands aren't clean.
- Avoid unnecessary interactions with other people. This means avoiding large gatherings, shaking hands with people or hugging them, and unnecessary travel, especially on public transport. You should also avoid going to public venues like bars, restaurants and cinemas. If it's possible in your job, try to work from home.
- You do NOT need to stay inside your house at all times or self-isolate. You can go for a walk, or to the park, or to the shops if you need to buy things. Just try to cut down the number of people you meet with on a daily basis. And try to keep your distance from people when you see them.
- Carry on taking all your usual asthma medicines as normal.
- If someone you live with develops symptoms of COVID-19, you will need to stay in your home for 14 days.

If you have asthma and you DO have symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough or a fever):

- You need to stay in your home for 7 days if you live on your own, or 14 days if you live with others. Everyone in your household will need to stay in the house for 14 days.
- You don't need to contact 111 to tell them you are staying at home.
- If your COVID-19 symptoms don't go away after 7 days, or get worse, or you are having difficulty breathing, call 111 for advice, or 999 if you need emergency care.
- Tell them that you have asthma, and if your asthma symptoms are getting worse.
- If you get an asthma cough and are not sure whether your cough is a symptom of COVID-19 or related to your asthma, please speak to your GP, use the [online 111 service](#) or call 111 to ensure that you get the right care.
- Keep following your asthma action plan to manage your asthma and so you know what to do if your asthma symptoms get worse. If you are having an asthma attack, call 999 for an ambulance as usual, and tell them you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Carry on taking all your usual asthma medicines as normal.

Make sure you can get what you need

You should make plans to help you cope if the spread of the virus causes significant

disruption, or if you are asked to self-isolate. This might include making sure you know how you would get your medicines, food and other essential items if you had to self-isolate, and thinking about how you would stay in touch with friends and family. You should register with your GP surgery for online services like ordering your prescriptions.

Please see the [NHS advice on staying at home](#) for more information.

If you have severe asthma

[Severe asthma](#) is asthma that is hard to treat, and often the symptoms are not well controlled, even with high doses of medicines.

Having severe asthma is likely to put you at higher risk of complications from COVID-19. The NHS will contact you from the 23rd March to tell you what to do if you are in this higher-risk group. For now, you should follow the advice above, and try to be extra careful about avoiding unnecessary contact with other people.

What to do if your asthma is getting worse

If your asthma is getting worse and you have symptoms of COVID-19, please use the [111 online service](#) or call 111. Don't go to your doctor's surgery.

When you contact 111:

- Let them know that you have asthma and that you're getting asthma symptoms.
- Explain how often you are using your reliever inhaler and if it's not working completely or lasting for 4 hours.
- Follow the instructions given to you by 111.
- If your symptoms get worse quickly and you're worried you are having an asthma attack, call 999 and let them know you may have coronavirus and are having an asthma attack. See [our asthma attack advice](#) for more information.

If your asthma is getting worse and you don't have symptoms of COVID-19, make an urgent appointment to see your GP as usual. They may ask to speak to you by phone or video. If you have an asthma attack, follow the steps on your action plan and call 999 for an ambulance if you need to.

Help if you're feeling anxious

Some people with asthma are telling us they feel anxious and worried about coronavirus. The Mental Health Foundation has produced a great list of [tips to help people cope with anxiety](#). Ideas include:

- Making sure you're looking after yourself, so you feel more able to cope with whatever happens.
- Watch out for bad habits like increasing your alcohol consumption. Try to make sure you are getting some exercise
- Only looking at reliable sources of information, like the NHS and the gov.uk websites.
- Staying connected to friends and family and talking about your worries.

We hope you have found this content useful

Our team of health experts is [working tirelessly on a daily basis to provide the latest and most up to date health advice concerning Coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) for people with asthma.

[Record numbers of people now need our support](#). As a charity our help and advice are only possible thanks to kind donations from people like you.

If you can and are able, [please donate now](#).

Donate



Speak to an asthma expert nurse on our helpline [0300 222 5800](#)

We are experiencing exceptionally high call volumes. Many more people are seeking our help than usual, due to the current coronavirus situation. We are

providing the best service we can under these extraordinary circumstances. Please be mindful of the pressures in the whole system when using our services.

We are updating our website with information as we receive it:

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/coronavirus>

Our helpline is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Visit our [contact page](#) for more ways of getting in touch.