



Wellbeing Newsletter



March 2020

Coping with Covid 19

Latest update

Colleagues, partners, residents and local services.

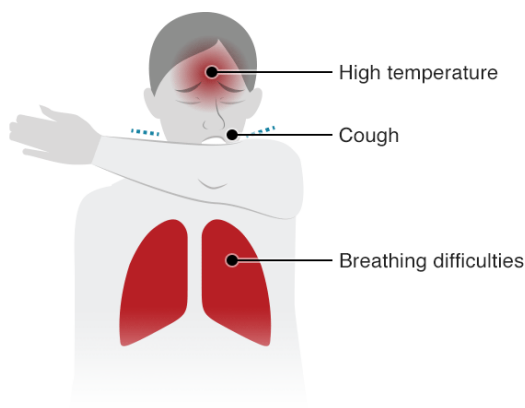
You will have heard the latest government advice. All face to face activities, clubs, events and services are now closed during the COVID 19 outbreak. In this special edition newsletter, you can find out what you need to know to stay safe & well during the suggested self-isolation period. You can also find out how Reading is reacting to the loss of services and how you can get involved and help support older people.

coronavirus symptoms

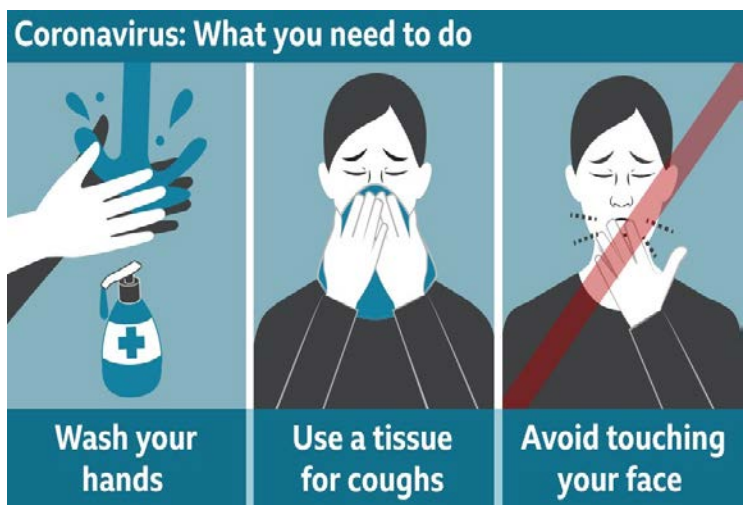
Coronavirus infects the lungs. The symptoms often start with a **fever** and/or a **new dry continuous cough**, which can lead to breathing problems.

It takes five-six days on average to start showing the symptoms, some people it could take longer. For more information about the virus and what to do see [NHS choices website on coronavirus](#)

Coronavirus: Key symptoms



Source: NHS



What can you do to stay well?

- You may have heard of 'social distancing' a lot in the news. You are encouraged to avoid spaces where lots of people gather such as community clubs, pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas.
- Where possible ask relatives and friends not to visit
- Certainly, avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus
- Only travel on public transport if you need to
Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Try singing "Happy Birthday" twice over.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Keep active, with seated exercise. Use what you have available but keep moving. Go into the garden for fresh air, if you can!
- Stay warm, keep your house well heated
- Stay hydrated, plenty of fluids
- Ensure you have a few days supplies of food, try to eat a variety of foods including fresh fruit and vegetables as these will help your body to function at its best.
- If you smoke, you may be more likely to catch the virus or suffer worse symptoms – see www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com or call **0118 449 2026** for friendly support on quitting smoking without having to leave your home.
- Listen to the radio, watch TV for latest news on the virus
- Stay connected. Call a friend, family members, email or write a letter to maintain your relationships
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, when you need it. We all in this together.

Things to do!

- Watch a comedy on TV and laugh!
- Listen to podcasts <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w13xttx2/episodes/downloads>
- Read a book, complete a puzzle, do an online quiz anything to keep our brains active <https://www.triviaplaza.com/>
- Learn a new skill <https://origami.me/>
- Listen to music, singing is so good for your mood, have a little dance around the house, or sit and boogie
- Bake a cake, paint, draw, Knit. Pick up those old hobbies
- Complete a workout https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt_hUkaRoOo

Looking after your mental wellbeing

[Mental Health.org](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) says

Infectious disease outbreaks, like the current Coronavirus (Covid 19), can be scary and can affect our mental health. While it is important to stay informed, there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during such times.

Follow the link for some tips we hope will help you, your friends and your family to look after your mental health at a time when there is much discussion of potential threats to our physical health. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Mental health charity Mind has tips for those who may be alone or worried about the virus, including putting extra photos up of people you care about, and limiting how long you read the news.

It says elderly relatives could also be encouraged to:

- stay active by cleaning, dancing, or doing **seated exercises**
- get as much sunlight and fresh air as they can
- join an online support community, **such as Elefriends**

There are also steps to help prevent loneliness in those avoiding contact or staying at home.

Olivia Field, loneliness lead at the British Red Cross, says those staying at home should make sure they find time to do things they enjoy, such as watching TV, reading, writing, art or cooking.

"Ensuring you feel stimulated and have fun protects against loneliness and improves your general wellbeing," she says.

"Remember there are other ways to connect with friends and family - for example, phone, email, social media.

"Talking to people about your worries, about feeling lonely, or simply just about your day, helps."

If you have concerns about an elderly relative's health or need more information about coronavirus, you can **visit the NHS 111 website**. <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111/>

Supporting those living with Dementia

Somebody I care about is living with dementia. What should I do about coronavirus? If you're caring for a person living with dementia, you may be more worried about coronavirus.

There are some things you can do to help prevent the person from catching any viruses. If you need to stay at home ([self-isolate](#)), there are also other ways to support the person with dementia.

- Check that they have handwash and hand sanitiser available – maybe singing a song with them can encourage the person to wash their hands. Make sure that any visitors know to make use of sanitiser too
- Clean things that are handled a lot, such as remote controls, door handles and taps
- If the person or their primary carer is self-isolating, you might help with practical tasks. The person might need shopping dropped off, medicine collected, or some library books left outside the door for them – ask how you can help. Many communities are also forming groups of volunteers to offer this kind of help
- Make sure the person has all the medication they need. You can speak to a GP or local pharmacist to make sure they will have a supply. Keep checking in to make sure they are continuing to take the right medication
- Check that they have a plan of what to do if they do get unwell – leave the number(s) to call prominently displayed
- If the person is going to be indoors for a while, encourage them to stay active and consider [gentle exercises](#). Try to make sure they have activities that they can engage in at home as well; reading, magazines, jigsaws, music, knitting, their favorite TV/radio programmes available.
- Keep in touch by phone, post, email or Skype. They may be anxious about the situation. Tell the person that you're thinking of them and encourage others to do so as well.
- Make sure that they have [our phone number](#) so that they know that we are here to help.

The Alzheimer's Society have so much on-line support for people living with dementia. Check out their website for all the help and support you may need.

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

Follow the Alzheimer's Society blogs on Covid 19

https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog?dm_i=5PV4,ROG,B2K1X,2LP1,1

Steps to be kind to yourself and your neighbours

The Red Cross believes that little acts of kindness are important, now more than ever, and really do go a long way in times of crisis.

How to help your neighbours

If you are safe and well:

- **Keep in touch** regularly with family, friends and neighbours – a quick chat on the phone or a message on social media will raise their spirits and yours.
- **If you can, be the eyes and ears** of your community (but keep that social distance!) by checking on people who may be vulnerable or isolated and finding out what they might need – can you pick up shopping or medicines safely and leave them where they can access them?
- **No one needs trolley loads of toilet roll!** Only buy what you need so that there is enough for everyone, especially for those who can't afford to buy ahead.

- **Do look after yourself** – eating, sleeping and exercising safely (even indoors) will help keep you well and more able to support others.

And if you have to self-isolate:

- **Keep talking** about what you're going through with family, friends and neighbours – speaking to people always helps.
- **If you can, stick to your routines** around the house, as this will help you feel more in control.
- **No one needs to go through this alone.** There is plenty of support out there – jot down a list of numbers e.g. charities, your local council, who can give advice.
- **Do remember that we're all in this together,** you're not alone and people care, so use all the contacts and networks you can to get through this challenge.
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Fit & well? You still need to look after you!

Website: <https://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

There is a useful checklist on this website as well:

Checklist: are you ready to stay at home for two weeks?

- **Food:** do you have a way to get food delivered?
- **Cleaning:** are your cleaning supplies stocked up?
- **Money:** can you budget for any higher bills or expenses? Will you save money from lower transport costs that you could spend elsewhere?
- **Work:** can you work from home or not? If not, what are your rights to payment or benefits?
- **Medication:** do you have enough medication, or a way to get more?
- **Health:** can you reorganise any planned therapy or treatments?
- **Commitments:** can someone else help you care for any dependents, walk your dog, or take care of any other commitments?
- **Connectivity:** have you checked the contact details of the people you see regularly, like their phone numbers or email addresses?
- **Routine:** can you create a routine or timetable for yourself? And if you live with other people, should you create a household schedule? Do you need to agree how the household will run with everyone at home all day?
- **Exercise:** is there any physical activity you can do inside your home, such as going up and down the stairs, using bean tins as weights, or exercises you can do in your chair?

- **Nature:** have you thought how you could access nature? Can you get some seeds and planting equipment, houseplants or living herbs?
- **Entertainment:** have you thought about things to do, books to read or TV shows to watch?
- **Relax:** have you got materials so you can do something creative, such as paper and colouring pencils?

Remember we all in this together!

Volunteer and help those in most need

Many of Reading's community groups, residents, voluntary organisations and businesses are pulling together to help those in need of assistance in our neighbourhoods.

Can you help?

Team Reading: Coronavirus Response Volunteers

Support volunteers needed for Reading Voluntary Action (RVA)

We are asking people to sign-up now to join a list of Response Volunteers who can be called upon to support the activities of local organisations in their response to the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak as required.

It is difficult to predict what help might be required but it may involve supporting with:

Delivering food supplies

picking up prescriptions

telephoning isolated vulnerable people to check on their wellbeing.

Please complete the form found <https://rvaforms.wufoo.com/forms/zecqa871u9blv3/> if you feel you might be able to help. Your details will be added to a telephone/ email list and we will contact responders to ask them if they are able to help with certain tasks should the need arise.

COMMUNITY ACTION RESPONSE: COVID-19

5 things you can do to make a positive difference in your community

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|  <p>Think of others, consider your actions & be kind</p> |  <p>Connect and reach out to your neighbours</p> |  <p>Make the most of local online groups</p> |  <p>Support vulnerable or isolated people</p> |  <p>Share accurate information and advice</p> |
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• Local services ready to help those in most need

- Age UK Berkshire <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/berkshire/> Tel 0118 959 4242
- Age UK Reading <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/reading/> Tel 0118 950 2480
- British Red Cross <https://www.redcross.org.uk/> Tel 0118 935 8218
- Berkshire West Your Way (Together for Mental Wellbeing) Tel: 07484535596
- Alzheimer's Society <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/> Tel 0333 150 3456
- Reading Borough Council Tel 0118 937 3787
- NHS Non-Urgent Tel 111

Reading Services Guide

Social groups ★ lunch clubs ★ activities ★ support ★ services.
Visit www.reading.gov.uk/servicesguide or call 0118 937 3747



On behalf of all of us at Reading Borough Council and the Voluntary sector & Community services, we wish you, very well.

If you have any queries, please contact Wellbeing.Service@reading.gov.uk



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