

How to avoid COVID-19 for people at most risk of severe COVID-19 disease

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This leaflet is based on the new HPSC guidance **COVID-19 [Guidance](#) for Older People and Others at Risk of Severe Disease on Reducing Risk of COVID-19 Infection.**

People get COVID-19 from other people. By far the most important thing you can do to protect yourself is to keep the number of people you spend face to face time with as low as you can. Limit your face to face time to people you can trust to stay away if they have any symptoms of infection.

People, including people at high risk of severe COVID-19 disease, have the right to make their own decisions and the responsibility to look after their own health and the health of others. This involves making choices about what they need to do and want to do to while keeping the risk of COVID-19 as low as they can.

Reducing your risk

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person. There is almost no chance of you becoming infected at home if people with COVID-19 do not come to your home. You are at increased risk if you are in a place where there are people from outside of your household, whether for work or for social or personal reasons.

Living with other people

We usually don't want to and can't avoid the people who live in our household for a long time. Trying to do that can make everyone unhappy and stressed.

You can feel safer at home and you can relax there if:

- everyone in the house is careful when they go out
- anyone in the house gets symptoms of COVID-19 or is told they are a COVID-19 Contact keeps away from everyone else in the house straightaway.

Safety for the household depends on everyone who lives in the house following these steps.

Visitors to your home

It is important to keep the number of people who visit your home in line with the Framework Level that is in place at the time.

- try to keep the number of people who come into your house to a small circle of trusted family or friends
- check that anyone who comes to the house to visit or to do essential work is well before they come in (no symptoms of COVID-19)
- ask visitors to clean their hands when they arrive, to wear a mask and to keep a safe distance from you whenever possible.

Mind your health

If you need healthcare workers to come in to your home to help you care for yourself or someone else in the house it is better for you to let them in than it is to keep them out.

If you become unwell call your GP. If you have an appointment with your GP or at a hospital or clinic it is important to keep the appointment.

Keep well

The risk of contracting COVID-19 is generally much lower outdoors than indoors. The risk of leaving home for a walk or drive is very low if you keep away from other people. You can lower the risk by going out at quiet times, keeping your distance from other people, not touching things if you do not need to touch them, cleaning your hands and wearing a face covering.

Try to keep active and look after your general health. A healthy way of life improves your chance of recovery if you get COVID-19.

- Keep in touch with family and friends over the phone or online if you have access. Staying in touch with other people is important for our mental health.
- Keep yourself active by getting up and moving as much as possible in your house or garden where you can spend some time in the fresh air.
- Try to eat healthily; preparing meals at home and trying new recipes can be a way of learning new skills
- Make sure you have access to books, craft materials, DVDs, puzzles etc. to stimulate you during the day.

- Clean surfaces that you touch daily with your usual cleaning product. Surfaces we touch often include; counter tops, door handles, toilet handle and flush, bedside table, phones, keypads etc.

If you need help for any reason there are a number of places you can go for help including:

- HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams (www.hse.ie) Contact details are accessible [here](#)
- SAGE (1850 71 94 00 from 8 in the morning until 10 at night) www.sageadvocacy.ie
- The HSE confidential recipient at 1890 1000 14
- [Alzheimer Society of Ireland](http://www.alzheimer.ie) 1800 341 341 (www.alzheimer.ie).
- Family Carers Ireland 1800 240724 www.familycarers.ie click here for their [emergency plan](#) document
- ALONE has a telephone support line, seven days a week from 8am – 8pm, 081 8222024. This is for all older people and their families if they would like any information or support. This support line is also open to extremely medically vulnerable people.
- If you need medical assistance call your GP or in an emergency call 112 or 999