

Coronavirus (COVID-19): unpaid carers providing personal care

Using PPE to help prevent the spread of the virus for people who visit or live with a friend/family and provide help with washing or dressing.

Overview

This is advice for unpaid carers who visit or live with a friend or family member to provide help with personal care such as washing or dressing. It covers the situations in which unpaid carers may require personal protective equipment (PPE).

It is split into:

1. general advice for all unpaid carers to help prevent the spread of COVID-19
2. advice for carers who live in the same household as the person they care for
3. advice for carers who do not live in the same household as the person they care for
4. where to get PPE

General advice

Wash your hands. It is important that you ensure you perform hand hygiene using soap and water or hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day and before and after providing any personal care. This is a key measure in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Assist the person you care for with hand hygiene regularly particularly before and after meals and after toileting.

Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and dispose of them in the nearest waste bin after use. If you have no tissues to hand, you should cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow. Wash your hands with soap and water afterwards.

Provide the person you care for with tissues to catch coughs and sneezes.

Follow this general advice and [physical distancing advice](#) on NHS inform.

You should plan ahead for any scenario in which you may not be able to provide care for your friend or family member. Your [local carers centre may be able to assist with emergency planning](#).

Advice for carers living in the same household

Neither I nor the person I care for have any COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the [general advice](#).

Wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide. No additional PPE for COVID-19 is required unless you or the person you care for is in the shielding category or symptomatic of COVID-19. See the sections below.

The person I care for is shielding (extremely high risk group)

Follow the [general advice](#).

Familiarise yourself with the [shielding advice](#) on NHS inform and help the person you care for adhere to shielding advice.

Wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide.

You should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member.

After you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more.

The face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable.

PPE can be disposed of in the normal household waste bin immediately after use provided the person you are caring for has no symptoms of COVID-19.

I (carer) am shielding (extremely high risk group)

Follow the [general advice](#).

Follow the [shielding advice](#) on NHS inform.

If the person you care for develops symptoms of COVID-19 you should seek to make alternative arrangements for their care and ensure you avoid all contact with them. If you are unable to provide essential care for someone, you should contact your local social work department.

Where you are providing personal care you must:

- wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide

- wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member. This is to protect you and is only necessary when providing personal care because it is assumed you will be in very close contact (within 2 metres) with your friend or family member and unable to keep a safe distance
- after you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more.
- the face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable
- dispose of PPE in the normal household waste immediately after use provided the person you are caring for has no symptoms of COVID-19

The person I care for has COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the [general advice](#).

Also follow the [guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) on NHS inform.

Wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide.

You should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member.

After you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more.

The face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable.

When removed, PPE must be placed in a disposable bag and then a secondary disposable bag. It should be tied and held for 72 hours before being placed in the household waste bin for collection.

I (carer) have COVID-19 symptoms

If you have developed symptoms of COVID-19 but the person you care for has no symptoms, you should not provide direct care and seek to make alternative arrangements for care of your friend/family member.

You should try to stay 2 metres from them as much as possible and follow [guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) on NHS inform.

If the person you care for also has symptoms of COVID-19, you can continue to provide care provided you feel well enough to do so OR where you are unable to make alternative care arrangements you must:

- wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide
- you should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member
- after you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more
- your face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable

When removed, PPE must be placed in a disposable bag and then a secondary disposable bag. It should be tied and held for 72 hours before being placed in the household waste bin for collection.

Advice for carers who do not live in the same household

Neither I nor the person I care for have any COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the [general advice](#).

Wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide.

No additional PPE for COVID-19 is required unless the person you care for is in the shielding category or either you or they are symptomatic of COVID-19 – see sections below.

The person I care for is shielding (extremely high risk group)

Follow the [general advice](#).

Ideally someone in the same household should provide care for your friend or family member.

Where someone in the same household cannot provide care you should:

- familiarise yourself with the [shielding advice](#) on NHS inform and help the person you care for adhere to shielding advice
- wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide.
- you should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member.
- after you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more.

- the face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable.
- PPE can be disposed of in the normal household waste immediately after use provided the person you are caring for has no symptoms of COVID-19

I (carer) am shielding (extremely high risk group)

Follow the [general advice](#).

Follow the [shielding advice](#) on NHS inform.

Where possible, you should seek to make alternative arrangements for care of your friend or family member.

If the person you care for develops symptoms of COVID-19 you must not care for them and seek to make alternative arrangements for care.

Where there are no alternative care arrangements you must:

- wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would, depending on the type of care you provide.
- you should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing close care for your friend or family member. This is to protect you and is only necessary when providing personal care because it is assumed you will be in very close contact with your friend or family member and unable to keep a safe distance.
- after you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more
- your face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable
- PPE can be disposed of in the normal household waste immediately after use provided the person you are caring for has no symptoms of COVID-19

The person I care for has COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the [general advice](#) and the [guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) on NHS inform.

Wherever possible, care should be provided by someone who lives in the same household as the symptomatic individual requiring care.

Where care cannot be provided by someone in the same household you should:

- wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would depending on the type of care you provide.

- you should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member.
- after you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more
- your face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable

Place PPE in a disposable bag and then a secondary disposable bag when removed. It should be tied and held for 72 hours before being placed in the household bin for collection.

I (carer) have COVID-19 symptoms

You should not provide direct care if you develop symptoms of suspected COVID-19 and seek to make alternative arrangements for care of your friend/family member.

You should cease all visits to their household until 7 days after onset of symptoms and follow the [guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) on NHS inform.

Only in an emergency where alternative care cannot be provided by someone else you should:

- wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons or gloves as you normally would, depending on the type of care you provide
- you should also wear a face mask for the period of time you are providing care for your friend or family member
- after you have provided care directly to the individual, you should remove the face mask (and any other PPE) and maintain a distance of 2 metres or more
- your face mask should be replaced if it becomes damaged, soiled or uncomfortable

Place PPE in a disposable bag and then a secondary disposable bag when removed. It should be tied and held for 72 hours before being placed in the household bin for collection.

Where to get personal protective equipment (PPE)

If you believe you are eligible for PPE based on the advice provided on the previous pages and you cannot access it through your normal routes, please contact your local carers' centre and they will advise you on how to access supplies locally.

A [list of local carers' centres and young carer services](#) can be found on the Care Information Scotland site.

If your local carers' centre is unavailable, you can call the Social Care PPE Support Centre on 0300 303 3020 and they can provide you with information.

Directorate: [Community Health and Social Care Directorate](#)

Part of: [Coronavirus in Scotland](#), [Health and social care](#)