



Coronavirus and letters from the NHS for 'very high risk' patients

The government have sent letters to all people in the UK identified as being at 'very high risk' from Covid-19. The letter advises those individuals to 'shield' themselves from catching coronavirus. All letters should have been received by 30th March 2020. **The letter has only been sent to those people considered to be at the very highest risk.**

The letters have been sent to people who fall into the following groups:

- People with a solid organ transplant such as a kidney or liver transplant
- People with specific cancers:
 - People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors.
 - People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- People who are pregnant with significant congenital heart disease
- All patients on the following medications: Azathioprine, Mycophenolate (both types), Cyclosporin, Sirolimus, Tacrolimus.

If you have not received a letter this probably means you do not fall into one of the above groups of people.

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For advice on shielding go to:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/>

For advice for people who are at higher risk but who do not need to shield go to:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/>

For a summary of all advice for people vulnerable to Covid-19 go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Advice on getting extra help if you are shielding and do not have friends or family who can help:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

If you have not been sent a shielding letter and feel you should have been included in the 'very high risk' group then please speak to your hospital specialist or GP.

Other useful weblinks for guidance about specific health conditions are as below:

Asthma

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/>

COPD and other long-term lung conditions:

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/coronavirus>

Rheumatoid arthritis and other arthritis conditions:

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/covid-19-updates/arthritis-and-covid-19-your-questions-answered/>

Assessing your risk if you are taking drugs that suppress the immune system:

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/covid-19-updates/covid-19-assessing-your-risk/>

Cancer

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus/cancer-and-coronavirus>

Kidney transplant patients

<https://www.kidneycareuk.org/news-and-campaigns/coronavirus-advice/>

Liver transplant patients

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-health-advice-for-people-with-liver-disease-and-liver-transplant-patients/>