

# Coronavirus advice and guidance

by

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For those of you who don't know me I am a GP at Brannam Medical Centre in Barnstaple. I also am part of the team co-ordinating the healthcare response to coronavirus (COVID-19) across all four practices in Barnstaple.

I think it is unlikely that anyone is left in any doubt about the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are lucky in Loxhore, surrounded by fresh air and countryside, that social distancing and self-isolation need not be as challenging as it may be elsewhere. Furthermore we have a fantastic and caring community. However it is also true that a high proportion of our residents are at risk of more serious illness if they contract the disease; and that prolonged social isolation may become difficult for some.

I hope some of the points below may be of some help but bear in mind this is a very fast moving situation and official advice is changing all the time. Please be careful where you are getting your information from.

## 1. Are you in a high risk group?

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)
  - chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
  - [chronic kidney disease](#)
  - chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
  - [diabetes](#)
  - problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
  - a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)
  - being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

**If so, you should be taking social distancing measures**, which you can find by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

Social distancing is actually physical distancing; it does not mean social isolation. You need space, but you also need connection and more details about community support in Loxhore will follow.

2. Anyone with recent onset of **either**

- A temperature of greater than 37.8C

or

- A new, continuous cough

**MUST self-isolate for 7 days. And the household must self-isolate for 14 days.**

Here is the official self-isolation advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

And here is a very useful graphic for households:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/874011/Stay\\_at\\_home\\_guidance\\_diagram.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874011/Stay_at_home_guidance_diagram.pdf)

4. I and others are very happy to public health provide advice where possible. But for health advice please call 111 or your own GP (I realise this is me in several cases!) through the normal channels.

Please follow the guidance and stay safe.

With best wishes,

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