

MANAGING MY SYMPTOMS

How to look after yourself at home if you have coronavirus (COVID-19)

Many people with coronavirus (COVID-19) feel better within a few days but for some it may take several weeks before full recovery occurs. You may be able to look after yourself at home while you recover.

While you're ill, ask a friend, family member or neighbour to check up on you. Arrange a regular phone call (not face to face) so they can check how you're doing.

Treating a high temperature

If you have a high temperature, it can help to:

- get lots of rest
- drink plenty of fluids (water is best) to avoid dehydration – drink enough so your pee is light yellow and clear
- take [paracetamol](#) or [ibuprofen](#) if you feel uncomfortable

Treating a cough

If you have a cough, it's best to avoid lying on your back. Lie on your side or sit upright instead.

To help ease a cough, try having a teaspoon of honey. But do not give honey to babies under 12 months.

If this does not help, you could [phone or email a pharmacist](#) for advice about cough treatments.

Important: Do not go to a pharmacy

Phone or email your local pharmacy instead. Those who have confirmed COVID-19 infection are required by law to stay at home. If you do not have confirmed COVID-19 infection but do have symptoms, you should stay at home.

Get help while you're staying at home

St Johns can help you while you have to stay at home (self-isolate). They can help with things like prescriptions and grocery deliveries. You can contact them on 01481 742147.

Things to try if you're feeling breathless

Try not to panic if you're feeling breathless. This can make it worse. If you're feeling breathless, it can help to keep your room cool. Try turning the heating down or opening a window. Do not use a fan as it may spread the virus.

Try:

- breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, with your lips together like you're gently blowing out a candle
- sitting upright in a chair
- relaxing your shoulders, so you're not hunched
- leaning forward slightly – support yourself by putting your hands on your knees or on something stable like a chair

Urgent advice: call 999 or a GP if:

- you're feeling gradually more unwell or more breathless
- you have difficulty breathing when you stand up or move around
- you feel very weak, achy or tired
- you're shaking or shivering
- you've lost your appetite
- you're unable to care for yourself – for example, tasks like washing and dressing or making food are too difficult
- you still feel unwell after 4 weeks – contact your GP for advice.

Immediate action required: Call 999 if:

- you're so breathless that you're unable to say short sentences when resting
- your breathing has got suddenly worse
- you cough up blood
- you feel cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin
- you have a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin and does not fade when you roll a glass over it
- you collapse or faint
- you feel agitated, confused or very drowsy
- you've stopped peeing or are peeing much less than usual

Please call the Emergency Department via the hospital (225241 in Guernsey 822822 in Alderney) before attending and advise them of your positive status.

Babies and children

Call your GP if you're worried about a baby or child.

If they seem very unwell, are getting worse, or you think there's something seriously wrong, call 999.

Do not delay getting help if you're worried. Trust your instincts.

Pregnancy advice

If you're pregnant or have recently given birth, contact your midwife, GP or maternity team if you have any concerns or questions.

If you have a pulse oximeter

A pulse oximeter is a device that clips on your finger to check the level of oxygen in your blood.

Low levels of oxygen in your blood can be a sign you're getting worse. A pulse oximeter can help you spot this before you feel breathless or have any other symptoms, so you can get help quickly.

You may be asked by a GP or healthcare professional to monitor your oxygen levels if you're at a high risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.

If you're using a pulse oximeter at home, make sure it has a CE mark, UKCA mark or CE UKNI mark. This means that the device will work properly and is safe if used correctly.

It's helpful to write down your readings, so you know what your oxygen level is when you first use the pulse oximeter and can spot if your level is going down. This can also help if you need to speak to a healthcare professional.

Speak to a GP or healthcare professional before using your pulse oximeter and tell them if you have any questions or concerns.

If you have brown or black skin

Pulse oximeters work by shining light through your skin to measure the level of oxygen in your blood.

There have been some reports they may be less accurate if you have brown or black skin. They may show readings higher than the level of oxygen in your blood.

You should still use your pulse oximeter if you've been given one. The important thing is to check your blood oxygen level regularly to see if your readings are going down.

What to do if your blood oxygen level drops

Blood oxygen level	What to do
95 to 100	Stay at home and continue to check your blood oxygen level regularly
93 or 94	Check your blood oxygen level again within an hour – if it's still 93 or 94, call your GP surgery for advice
92 or below	Check your blood oxygen level again straight away – if it's still 92 or below, call 999

If, for any pre-existing medical reason, your blood oxygen level is usually below 95 but it drops below your normal level, call your GP surgery for advice.

If you need to call for help, tell the person you speak to what your blood oxygen level is.

When to get help if you're pregnant

If you're pregnant and your blood oxygen level:

- is going down, contact your GP, midwife or maternity team
- is 94 or below, contact your hospital immediately or call 999