

COVID-19 - resources for parents and carers

At RCPCH we understand this is a worrying time for children and their families. Below are some useful resources from across the UK.

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Key messages

COVID-19 is an illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

It is important that we **all** follow official guidance and information provided by the governments and health agencies so we can protect our families and other people who may become seriously ill if they are infected with COVID-19.

- Up to date information about how to **stay safe and stop the spread** of coronavirus is available for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).
- If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste) follow the advice for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).
- Testing and contact tracing is available in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).
- Regularly **wash your hands** for at least 20 seconds ([here's a handy video](#)), and if you cannot wash your hands use hand sanitiser.
- If your child has a medical condition or injury they should **continue to access treatment and attend medical appointments** as recommended by their hospital, GP or healthcare professionals. RCPCH has [advice for families](#) living across the UK about when and how to get medical help for your child, or for your young baby.
- Some children and young people will be clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. Up to date guidance on 'shielding' is available for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

COVID-19 linked syndrome

Most children and teenagers do **not** become seriously ill with COVID-19. But doctors have seen a very small number of patients with an unusual condition which seems to be linked to the virus.

Paediatric Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome temporally associated with COVID-19 (called PIMS-TS or PIMS for short) is very rare, and most children will not be seriously affected.

We've looked at the current evidence and worked with doctors to write a guide for parents, carers, teachers and others who look after children and young people.

[See guide on PIMS](#)

Talking to children and young people about COVID-19

Guidance from Children's Commissioners

Children's Commissioners across the UK have created guidance especially for children and young people:

- [England](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)

Stay at home activities

- RCPCH &Us has [stay at home activities](#), including a [children and young people's health diary](#) to write or draw feelings and questions and an [activity pack](#) that has fun things to do at home.
- [Change4Life](#) has ideas for indoor games and activities.

Returning to school

- Young Minds have advice on [supporting a child going back to school after lockdown](#).
- NSPCC have information on [how to talk to a child who is worried about going back to school](#).

Tips for parents

- Young Minds has tips on [how to talk to your child about the virus](#).
- NSPCC has advice on [talking to children who are worried about COVID-19](#).

Books, posters and colouring in to download

- You can [download a poster that explains COVID-19 to children below](#) - shared with permission and thanks to University Hospitals Southampton NHSFT.
- [Monkey Wellbeing](#) has posters and colouring in resources for children that include explaining why healthcare workers have to wear protective clothing, why visiting might be restricted and how you can keep in touch. They also have a Thank You NHS rainbow poster for you to colour in.
- [Coronavirus - A Book for Children](#) (PDF) which is illustrated by Axel Scheffler and has input from Professor Graham Medley (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) is available and free to download.
- [Dave the Dog is Worried about Coronavirus](#) (PDF) is a book for young children to download by Nurse Dotty Books.
- [My Hero is You, Storybook for Children on COVID-19](#) is available to download in 30 languages.

Podcast

- Dr Ranj (paediatrician and TV doctor) has a [one-off podcast](#) where he answers children's questions on coronavirus.

Online resources

- [NIHR Children and Young People Med-Tech Cooperative](#) has links to lots of useful COVID-19 related resources for families and young people that cover wellbeing, mental health, physical activity and learning.
- Young Scot has brought together lots of [helpful resources to help young people](#) at this challenging time - some of it is Scotland-based, but most is helpful wherever you are in the UK.

Medicines advice

- We have advice for parents on [anti-inflammatory medicines \(including ibuprofen\) and COVID-19](#)

- [Medicines for Children](#) provides practical and reliable information about giving medicines to your child.
- WellChild, a UK charity for children and parents with complex needs, has [information for parents and carer, which covers treatment plans, carers, hospital appointments](#) and signposts to other resources.

Visiting hospital

- If your child is in hospital or has a hospital appointment there is advice from [NHS England](#) about visiting. More advice will be available from your child's hospital ward or department.

Staying safe advice from UK Governments

England

- The government has [up to date guidance about COVID-19](#). This includes [information on local alert levels](#). They also have advice on [meeting with others safely](#) and [face coverings](#).
- The [NHS COVID-19 app](#) is available to download in England and Wales.
- If you or a member of your household have the symptoms of COVID-19 follow advice from [Public Health England](#). This includes information on how to get [tested and contact tracing](#). There is also [guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together](#).
- To check if you have coronavirus symptoms and for advice on what to do if you have go to [NHS 111 online](#).
- There is guidance from Public Health England for [everyone](#) and for [young people](#) on shielding people most likely to get unwell if they catch coronavirus.

Scotland

- NHS Inform has advice for the public on their [website](#), including [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#), information on how to get [tested and contact tracing](#). There is also guidance on [physical distancing](#), [protecting people who are most at risk of COVID-19](#) and [face coverings](#).
- The [Protect Scotland app](#) is free to download from NHS Scotland's Test and Protect service.
- The [NHS 24 website](#) has guidance about when to call the NHS 111 service.

Wales

- The most up-to-date information provided by the Welsh Government is available on their [website](#) including guidance on [what you can and can't do during the outbreak](#), [guidance for households with possible coronavirus](#) and [how to get tested](#). There is also guidance on [protecting those who are most at risk of COVID-19](#) and [face coverings](#).
- The [NHS COVID-19 app](#) is available to download in England and Wales.
- Public Health Wales (PHW) also has [guidance](#) on COVID-19.
- NHS Direct Wales 111 has a helpful [online self-assessment guide](#) you can click

through to let you know when they should be telephoning their helpline.

Northern Ireland

- The Public Health Agency (PHA) has useful information which can be found on their [website](#). This includes advice on [preventing the spread of COVID-19](#), [face coverings](#), [testing](#) and [contact tracing](#).
- There is also information on [nidirect](#) including advice of [staying at home and self-isolation](#).
- The Department of Education and the Public Health Agency have [information for parents and carers on stopping the spread of COVID-19 in schools](#).
- The Department of Health Northern Ireland has an [COVID-19 NI information app](#) that provides advice and links to vital trusted information.

Mental health and wellbeing

Resources for children and young people

- YoungMinds has [tips, advice and guidance](#) on where you can get support for your mental health during the pandemic.
- Every Mind Matters (NHS and Public Health England) has [information for young people on mental health and self-care](#).
- Anna Freud (National Centre for Children and Families) has [advice and selfcare resources](#) for young people to support their wellbeing.
- Childline has [advice for children and young people](#) if they're feeling unwell, worried or upset.
- NHS England has a blog for young people about [what to do if it is all getting too much](#).
- [Rise above](#) has inspiring and useful stories, videos, games and advice for young people.
- [Student Space](#) is a mental health programme to support students through the unique circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic.
- [Power of Youth](#) has resources, information, activities and thoughts from young people and organisations from all over the UK.

Resources for parents and carers

- Public Health England has [guidance for parents and carers on supporting children's mental health and wellbeing](#), including advice for families of children with physical health issues, learning disabilities and autism, plus those accessing mental health services and young carers.
- NHE England has a [blog for parents and carers](#) on how to help a child or young person who is struggling with their mental health, suicidal thoughts or self-harming behaviours
- Every Mind Matters (NHS and Public Health England) has information on [looking after a child or young person's mental health](#) during this time.
- The World Health Organization has a factsheet on [helping children to cope with stress \(PDF\)](#) during this outbreak.
- Parent Club has advice on [how to protect your family and how to cope with staying at home](#).
- The University of Reading and University of Oxford have developed [advice for parents and carers to help support children and young people with worries](#)

about COVID-19.

- Q Well provides [online counselling and wellbeing for adults](#) who may need support during this period.
- [NSPCC](#) has information and advice for parents and carers on a range of subjects that help to keep children safe and support the wellbeing of families during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- NHS Inform (Scotland's national health information service) provides advice on [mental wellbeing](#), [depression](#), [anxiety](#), [stress](#), [dealing with traumatic events](#) and [coping with money worries](#).

Condition and situation specific resources for families and children

Autism and ADHD

- Paediatrician Dr Max Davie, shared [tips in this short film to help people with ADHD](#) stay well.
- The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health has a podcast from Dr Ann Ozsvadijan and Dr Marianna Murin called '[Autism, a parent's guide](#)'.

Babies up to 3 months of age

- RCPCH has produced a [handy guide for parents of babies under three months](#) that gives advice about what to do if your baby is unwell during the coronavirus pandemic. The guide has versions for parents in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and is also available to download at the bottom of this page.
- NHS England has [information about coronavirus for parents of newborn babies](#), including signs and symptoms to look out for and how to reduce your baby's risk of catch coronavirus.
- The Institute of Health Visiting and RCPCH have published advice for parents about the [6 to 8 week check for newborn babies during the COVID-19 outbreak](#).

Cancer

- The Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group has [guidance for children and young people with cancer undergoing treatment](#).

Cardiology

- The British Heart Foundation have information on how [Coronavirus can affect people with heart or circulatory disease](#).
- The British Congenital Cardiac Association has [practical guidance for parents and carers](#).

Crohn's and colitis

- Crohn's and Colitis UK has [frequently asked questions on coronavirus](#), including specific information for children and young people and advice on immunosuppressive medication.

Diabetes

- Diabetes UK are providing regular [updates on coronavirus and diabetes](#).

Disability and complex health needs

- Contact, a charity for families with disabled children, has an [information page on COVID-19](#), covering education, welfare benefits and the Coronavirus Bill, and more.
- WellChild, a UK charity for children with complex needs and their parents and carers, has [information and resources for families](#) during the pandemic.
- The Council for Disabled Children has a [COVID-19 support and guidance webpage](#), including easy read posters about COVID-19 and information from other organisations.
- Special Needs Jungle has a collection of [information for children with special needs](#), including how to create an effective space for home learning and advice on your child's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- Together for Short Lives has a set of [frequently asked questions for families of children with serious life-limiting conditions](#).
- [Learning Disability Matters for Families](#) has a range of resources, contacts and useful information for families during the pandemic.
- Public Health England has an easy read factsheet on [looking after your health and body](#) (PDF), which can be used for young people with learning disabilities.
- NSPCC has [advice for parents and carers on supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The Challenging Behaviour Foundation has [information and resources for the families of people with severe learning disabilities](#).

Epilepsy

- Epilepsy Action has a set of [frequently asked questions for people with epilepsy](#).
- Young Epilepsy have a dedicated space for young people called [the Channel](#) which has information on COVID-19.

Operations

- The Centre for Perioperative Care has produced information for children and young people who are [going into hospital for an operation](#) over the pandemic.

Overseas visitors

- Diagnosis or treatment of COVID-19 is available free of charge to all overseas visitors including anyone living in the UK without permission. More information is available in [guidance from Public Health England](#).
- NHS Inform has information about free treatment for COVID-19 for all [overseas visitors to Scotland](#), including [for refugees and asylum seekers](#).

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

- The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) has [information for pregnant women and their families on COVID-19 and pregnancy](#).
- NHS Inform (Scotland) has information on [COVID-19: Pregnancy and newborn babies](#).

Renal

- The Renal Association and the British Association for Paediatric Nephrology have developed information and guidance [for children on haemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis and immune suppression \(including renal transplants\)](#).
- Kidney Care UK have coronavirus (COVID-19) [guidance for people with kidney disease including children](#).

Respiratory

- The British Lung Foundation has provided information and [guidance for people with asthma and lung conditions](#).
- Asthma UK has [health advice for people with asthma](#), including shielding advice for high risk groups and help for those feeling anxious.
- Cystic Fibrosis Trust has a [question and answers document](#) for people caring for someone with cystic fibrosis.

Sensory

- Sign Health has provided [sign language videos of the Government's daily press conferences](#), alongside latest guidance and resources.
- [The Buzz](#) provides support and information for deaf children and young people.

Social care

- [Cafcass co-parenting hub](#) has helpful links and advice to support families during the pandemic.

Young carers

- CarersUK has [guidance with resources for carers](#), including how to create a contingency plan and protect those that you care for.

Other advice for parents and families

Advice on when and where to seek help if your child is unwell.

- RCPCH has [advice for families](#) living across the UK about when and how to get medical help for your child, or for your young baby if they become unwell.

Advice if you are struggling because of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- If you are struggling because of COVID –19 you can find helpful information on the [UK Government website](#)

. This includes if you are feeling unsafe, worried about going into work, paying the bills, getting food or having somewhere to live or are concerned about your or someone else's mental health.

- [Turn2Us](#) is a national charity that provides financial support to help people get back on track.
- This Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) [COVID-19 page](#) provides important advice and updates for parents in the armed forces.

Keeping children safe from accidents at home

- It's always important to prevent accidental injuries, many of which occur in the home, and especially at this time. The Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents has helpful [advice for keeping children safe](#) and a [home and garden safety checklist](#).

Coping with a crying baby

- During this challenging time stress levels at home may increase. [ICON has helpful and reassuring advice](#) and a [leaflet](#) (PDF) on coping with a crying baby.

Safeguarding children

- NSPCC has a range of [guidance for keeping children safe from harm](#), including reporting child abuse and neglect.

E-safety

- The UK Government has [advice and support for parents and carers on how to keep children safe online](#).
- Think U Know is a [resource for children of all ages to learn more about how they can be protected online](#).
- The Children's Commissioner has produced [a digital safety and wellbeing kit for parents](#).
- Internet Matters offers [tips and advice for parents](#) on how to keep their children safe online.

Education and exams

- In England the Department for Education has produced guidance on [what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#).
- The Welsh government have provided guidance on [changes during coronavirus in schools](#). They also have information on keeping children safe in [childcare during COVID-19](#).
- Parent Club has [advice for parents and carers on returning to school and childcare settings in Scotland](#).
- The Northern Ireland Government has advice regarding [school, colleges and universities during COVID-19](#).
- Indoor Explorer has been developed by paediatricians and provides a range of [learning activities for children whilst they are at home](#).
- The Department for Education has advice for [helping children aged 2 - 4 years learn at home](#).

Explaining bereavement to children

- NHS has [advice to use when a child has lost a loved one](#) or a loved one is dying.
- The University of Oxford has produced guidance on how to tell children that someone has died, which you can [download below](#).
- Similar advice is also available from [Child Bereavement UK](#) and [Winston's Wish](#).

Face coverings

- The UK Government has guidance on [face coverings](#) including when they should be used and which groups of people do not need to wear them. Further advice on the use of face coverings is available for [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

Sleep

- Changes from your usual routine can affect your families' sleep patterns. Here are some tips from a clinical psychologist in the Evelina London sleep team, about [how to help maintain sleep quality](#).

Financial advice and support

- [Citizens Advice](#) has a range of information, including: help you may be access, paying bills, work arrangements and children's education during COVID-19.
- Turn 2 Us has [guidance for accessing benefits](#) during the coronavirus outbreak.

Helplines

For everyone

- [NSPCC](#) provide a Helpline that is staffed by trained professionals who can provide expert advice and support if you're concerned about a child, if you're a parent or carer looking for advice or if you're a professional in need of information and guidance.
- [Shout](#) provides free, confidential support, 24/7 via text for anyone in crisis. You can text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer
- [The Samaritans](#) have a free helpline that is available 24/7 for anyone who is having a difficult time or is worried about someone else. You can call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org.

For children and young people

- [ChildLine](#) provides a helpline for any child who is worried or needs help. You can call 0800 1111 any time for free or have an [online chat](#) with a counsellor.
- [The Mix](#) provides a free confidential [helpline](#), [crisis text line](#) and online service for under 25s that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem.

For parents and carers

- [Young Minds](#) has a [Parents' and Carers' Helpline](#) if you are worried about a child or young person's behaviour or mental health.
- [Contact](#) run a free [helpline](#) for parents and carers in the UK with a disabled child aged from birth to 25 who want to talk through their issues with an expert adviser.

Surveys and research

Details of surveys and research looking at children and young people's experience of COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Latest updates on this page

Updates in this version (5 March 2021)

- Updated information added to Education and exams section.

Updates in version 1 December 2020

- **Other advice for parents and families:** Added link to updated RCPCH advice posters for parents and carers on when and how to get advice if your child becomes unwell. Removed previous version of the poster.

Updates in version 18 November 2020

- Amended section for Newborn babies to Babies up to 3 months of age and added link to RCPCH guides for parents of babies under 3 months of age.
- Updated link for BCCA practical information.

Updates in version 27 October 2020

- Condition and situation specific resources for families and children: added link to information for children and young people going into hospital for an operation.
- Staying safe advice from UK governments: links to the NHS COVID-19 app and the Protect Scotland app.

Downloads

[COVID-19 child friendly poster](#) 472.64 KB

[Guidance: How to tell children that someone has died](#) 128.38 KB