



COVID-19 and guidance for those who were 'shielding'

The correct name for the virus is SARS-coronavirus-2 and the disease it causes is Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). SARS means Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Throughout the document this new (novel) disease will be referred to as COVID-19.

This document is intended to provide general information and is not intended to replace medical advice. Prostate Scotland **cannot give individual advice or recommend which treatments might be suitable for an individual or recommend individual medical care or health professionals**. If you are unsure in any way then you should always check with your urologist, oncologist, CNS or GP regarding treatments.

As the following is general information, guidance and procedures for each health board may be slightly different. If your oncologist, urologist or GP suggests, because of your specific health condition or treatments, that should avoid doing certain things, then you should always follow their advice.

We have compiled this information on COVID-19 for those who were/are shielding to the best of our knowledge and understanding at the present time. As the situation changes and as more knowledge and information become available, this information and guidance may change. We will try to keep you as up to date as possible.

As there is a new strain of COVID-19, new measures were introduced right across Scotland (except some of the islands please see below for more information) from midnight on 5 January. To reduce the risk of spreading the virus, all mainland Scotland is now a Level 4 area which means that everyone must stay at home as much as possible. These measures are currently in place until the end of January, but these will be reviewed in two weeks.

People shielding, should follow the same advice as the rest of the population. You should only leave your home and garden for an essential reason. You can read what these essential reasons are [here](#)

If you were/are on the shielding list, you should by now have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer setting out advice.

In general terms it advises:

- You should stay home as much as possible
- You should minimise contact with people outside your own household or 'bubble' if you can
- You should work from home and should **NOT** go to your workplace
- You should not use public transport

(More detailed guidance on each of these is continued below)

You can still go out for exercise and essential shopping or medicines.

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However, you should stay alert and be aware of Scottish government guidance on **FACTS**.

- F** - Face coverings
- A** - Avoid crowded places
- C** - Clean hands and surfaces regularly
- T** - Two metre distance apart
- S** - Self isolate if you have symptoms and book a test

If you are living in Tier/Level 4 restriction areas, what is the current situation as at 11.1.21?

Working

You should continue to work from home if you can.

If you cannot work from home and if you live or work in an area in lockdown, you should not go to work.

You should have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, called a shielding notification, which can be shown to your employer without the need for a GP fit note as long as lockdown restrictions are in place.

There is more information about financial assistance available with the following links:

Furlough. [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)

Benefits. [visit GOV.UK](#) or [contact Citizens Advice Scotland](#)

Financial help if self employed [get support from the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme at GOV.UK](#).

If you have the COVID-19 vaccination, what about work then?

You should follow all advice for those on the shielding list, even if you have had the COVID-19 vaccination. This includes the advice about work. While a full course of the vaccine (two doses) will help prevent you from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, it's not known as yet if it will keep you from catching and spreading the virus.

Medical appointments

You can still attend medical appointments and the GP Practice and hospital will have special measures in place to keep you safe.

Getting essential supplies, shopping and deliveries

In every protection level, you can visit shops and supermarkets yourself. They have put in protective measures to help keep you safe. If you decide to visit supermarkets and shops, you must wear a face covering and follow physical distancing advice. You should limit the number of times you visit shops, shop at quieter times, and shop online if you can.

If you are struggling to get essential food and supplies then ask family, friends, and neighbours for help. If you do need extra support getting food, medicine and other essentials, you can call the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000 (Monday-Friday, office hours). There is no plan to re-introduce food boxes at the present time.

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Signing up for priority access to online supermarket delivery slots

Supermarkets offering this service are:

- Asda
- Tesco
- Morrisons
- Sainsbury's
- Iceland
- Waitrose

You can sign up for this service in the following ways:

If you have not registered for priority access to an online delivery slot before, you can do this now.

1. You can use the shielding text message service
 - you are already signed up to the Scottish Government Shielding text messaging service, sign up for priority access to online slots by texting 1SHOP to 07860 064525 from your mobile.
 - If you are not signed up to our text messaging service, join by sending a text from your mobile with your Community Health Index (CHI) number to 07860 064525. Your CHI number is the 10-digit number shown at the top of this letter.
 - After you have done this, text 1SHOP to 07860 064525 to sign up for priority access to online delivery slots.
2. You can sign up by phone by calling the free National Assistance Helpline number on 0800 111 4000 (Monday – Friday, business hours).
3. If you are already signed up with a supermarket, they will send an email to the account you have registered with. If you do not receive a reply, check that the email address you have registered with is still correct or check your junk mail folder.

Travel and getting around

You should avoid public transport, including taxis. If you do use a taxi you and the driver must wear a face covering. Please walk, wheel and cycle instead.

You should only car share with members of your own or extended household. You can find more information about car sharing [here](#)

Meeting with others

Up to 2 people from 2 separate households can meet outdoors for sport, exercise or social interaction.

The rules for meeting people inside and outside are different during lockdown. You can find more guidance [here](#)

If you are living in Tier/Level 3 restriction areas, what is the current situation as at 11.1.21?

Only the following areas come into level 3:

- Orkney
- Shetland
- Na h-Eileanan Siar (Western Isles)
- The following islands within Argyll and Bute: Coll, Colonsay, Erraid, Gometra, Iona, Islay, Jura, Mull, Oronsay, Tiree, and Ulva
- All islands in Highland, except Skye, which comes within the national restrictions of Level 4.

Full information and guidance for those who live in Level 3 areas can be found [here](#).

How to register with the SMS Shielding Service

To register or sign up for this you will need to have your CHI number. Your CHI number (Community Health Index) is made up of 10 numbers and is specific to you. This can be found at the top of any shielding letters you were sent previously.

To register or sign up, all you have to do is text your CHI number to the special mobile number for this service: **07860 064 525**. Take care when entering your CHI number. If it's not correct you will get a text asking you to put the number in again. You will get an automatic reply back to say you're now registered.

This is an important and useful way of keeping you up to date with any new information.

Test and Protect

To help stop the spread of the virus, the Scottish government have introduced a new public health system to disrupt or break the way that COVID-19 is spread. It's called Test and Protect. The way it's designed to work, is to test, trace, self-isolate and support people who have or have the virus or been in close contact with people who carry the virus.

Track and trace

This means:

- Finding people in the population who have the virus, possibly those showing mild symptoms or carrying the virus but don't have symptoms. This is the test part.
- Finding (or tracing) then getting in touch with people who have been in close contact (being less than 2 metres away for more than 15minutes) with the person carrying the virus to let them know. This is the trace part.
- Giving all those in close contact help and advice about self-isolating and getting a COVID-19 test themselves.

Track and trace app for mobile phone

The app is part of the track and trace system and can be downloaded onto a mobile. It can be downloaded from apple app store or google play.

It's the practical and electronic way to help find who is carrying the virus and contact those people who have come into close contact with them.

The app does not hold personal information, know who you are, or know where you have been. It cannot identify you or track your movements.

Flu vaccine or jab

Flu is a serious illness and much worse than having a heavy cold. With COVID-19 still in our communities and the number of people diagnosed with COVID 19 starting to rise again, then it's even more important than ever to get the flu vaccine this autumn/winter to protect yourself, others and the NHS.

The programme of Flu vaccinations (jabs) has already started, and you may already have been called for your 'flu jab. People who have certain medical conditions, including people receiving chemotherapy, and those on immunosuppression and people over the age of 65 are entitled to free flu jabs in the first wave and other people over 55 in the second wave.

Where the 'flu vaccination will be done may be completely different than usual. In order to do all the 'flu jabs that are required this year, you may find you are not going to your GP practice but to a bigger venue such as town halls, community centres etc. No matter where the 'flu jab is being done, all precautions will be put in place to keep you and the staff safe – including wearing face coverings at all times and physical distancing.

The 'flu vaccine takes around 10 days to work and should help protect you from flu for around a year. The flu vaccine can't give you flu, but it can stop you catching it. You will be asked about any allergies when you attend. Some of the 'flu vaccines this year are prepared in hen's eggs so if you have an allergy to eggs then you should let staff know. This is also important to know if you are vegan.

The aim of the flu jab is to help prevent you from getting flu, but below there is a reminder of flu symptoms and comparing these with COVID-19 symptoms

Flu symptoms	COVID-19 symptoms
High temperature (fever) of 37.8°C (100.4F) or above	High temperature or fever (temperature greater than 37.8°C). This means you feel hot to touch on your head, face, chest or back
Dry, chesty cough	A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
Headache	Shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing
General aches and pains	A loss of, or a change in your sense of smell and taste called anosmia

Tiredness, weakness, feeling so exhausted and unwell that you have to stay in bed	Persistent pain or pressure on your chest
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Going out

With further restrictions now, it may seem a bit daunting to go outside when the world we lived in has changed again. There is a range of NHS resources that you may find helpful, including exercises [to improve strength and balance](#) and [gentle exercises](#) that can be performed while sitting.

Paths for All have also produced a leaflet of [ten simple exercises](#).

You should always check with your GP, urologist, oncologist or CNS before doing any exercise.

More information

The Scottish Government website has a wealth of information on their website if you have a specific concern or are looking for specific guidance. This includes information on:

- Looking after yourself and others
- Test and Protect: getting tested and self-isolating
- Health, care and social work
- Places of worship, marriages and civil partnerships, and funerals
- Culture, events, retail, hospitality and tourism
- Businesses and employers

You can access all the above the guidance [here](#).

Who should I contact if I become unwell or develop side effects while on treatment for cancer?

If you have chest pain, significant bleeding or you need immediate medical attention call 999.

If you have a temperature or shivering or flu-like symptoms while you are on treatment for cancer, or for any side-effects of drug treatment, call your local cancer treatment helpline, or the national Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711. They will ask a series of questions and will give advice or arrange for you to have a medical review at your nearest hospital.

About this information

The information contained in this leaflet has been developed by Prostate Scotland.

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