

Going Out After Shielding or Self-Isolating

If you have been at home for an extended period of time, going back out to do non-essential things such as attending social groups, seeing friends, or attending cultural events can be daunting. Here are some tips to give you an idea of what to expect, and preparations you can make in order to stay safe and enjoy yourself.

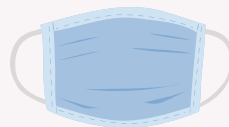
You still need to self-isolate for 10 days if you or anyone in your household has coronavirus symptoms or if you receive an NHS notification, even if you are vaccinated.

Take small steps towards going back to places and activities

We are all getting used to new ways of doing things, and re-familiarising ourselves with social situations and errands. Choose the activities and people that you have missed because they feel rewarding or aid your wellbeing – do not feel pressured to go back to everything as soon as it reopens. It might be tempting to make lots of plans and say yes to everything as things start to open up, but there's no need to rush. **Go at your own pace.**



Face coverings may still be requested



in some venues, and many people will still choose to wear one for extra peace of mind although there are no longer laws around them.

Coverings only offer protection if they securely cover your nose and mouth, and reusable ones should be washed after each use. If your face covering causes your glasses to fog up, make sure it is tight enough to stop warm air coming out of the top, position your glasses on top of the covering and **keep some lens wipes handy.**

Don't be afraid to ask for extra help

If you find it difficult to communicate with staff wearing face coverings, need somewhere to sit and rest, or wish to pay with cash rather than a bank card, staff should be ready to meet these needs. Do not feel that you are being burdensome if the measures do not work for you.



You can wear a sunflower lanyard to discreetly tell staff if you have a hidden disability



The sunflower symbol is recognised by staff in many shops and places where people meet, and will indicate that you have a 'hidden' disability – such as chronic pain, dementia, anxiety, visual or hearing impairment, and may need a little more time, some assistance, or may not be able to follow social distancing requirements. You can get a lanyard or card for free – search online for 'hidden disabilities sunflower'.

Check whether shops offer priority hours

As of June 2021, several supermarkets offer protected times for vulnerable people and those over 70, including

Aldi (30 minutes before opening Mon-Sat),
Co-op (8 am. to 9 a.m. Mon-Sat,
10:00-11:00 .m. Sunday)

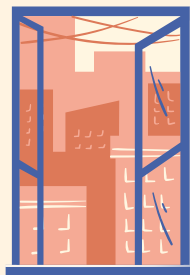
Tesco (Wednesday and Sunday 9:00-10:00 a.m. for browsing)

You can also call the shop or venue you are planning to attend and ask when their busiest hours are if you would like to avoid them.



If a space is open, it should be working to keep you safe

The current guidance reflects not only the lower case numbers in the UK at the moment, but the greater scientific knowledge on how the disease spreads. **Being outside or in a covered area with good airflow** is much safer than being indoors without windows open,



and keeping things people are touching clean makes a difference too. If you do not feel safe with the measures in place, remember you can **request that people give you more space** or find somewhere you feel more comfortable. You can also ring venues ahead of your visit to find out more about how they are keeping customers safe.

Keep your hands clean

When at home, especially before leaving or when returning, you should **wash your hands for 20 seconds with hand wash or soap**, but when you are out and about you can use **sanitising gel** instead. Many shops have sanitising stations, but it's best to carry a small bottle with you.

