UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Pandemic & staying home for 14 days

Official isolation rules change with the disease. What does not change is the value of being able to stay home if you are unwell, if you have been asked to isolate, or if movement is restricted. Treat 14 days as a practical planning horizon for food, medicine and contact, then follow NHS and UKHSA advice at the time.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Follow current NHS and UKHSA guidance for that illness — isolation periods are not always 14 days. If you are unwell, stay home and avoid contact with other people unless you are told otherwise.

02 Build, gradually, enough food, prescriptions, hygiene supplies and pet food to stay in for up to two weeks, and agree who would drop shopping at the door.

03 Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, ventilate rooms, clean shared surfaces, and get medical help early if you or someone at higher risk becomes more unwell.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

Severe difficulty breathing, collapse, or another immediate danger.

NHS URGENT ADVICE

111

If you are worsening, or unsure. Use 111.nhs.uk first if you can.

This guide is general public information for UK households. It is not a substitute for the emergency services, official local advice, or professional medical training. In an emergency, always call 999. Official warning and response advice can change — follow current guidance from the emergency services, the NHS and gov.uk/prepare. Three Day Kit (threedaykit.co.uk) is an independent brand and is not affiliated with, or endorsed by, the UK government or any official agency.

BEFORE

BUILD THE ABILITY TO STAY IN

You do not need to hoard. Add a little extra of what you already eat when you shop, keep prescriptions moving, and write down a stay-home plan. Official advice in an outbreak will come from the NHS, UKHSA and gov.uk — use those, not forwarded messages.

01 **Keep two weeks of the boring essentials**

A Three Day Kit covers a short outage. For a stay-home spell, stretch towards 14 days of food you actually eat, bottled water or a reliable tap supply, toiletries, soap, pain relief you already use, and pet food. Rotate stock so nothing expires unused. Ready-to-feed formula and nappies if you need them.

02 **Do not let medicines run to the last dose**

Request repeat prescriptions at least five working days before you need them. Keep a written list of names, doses and your GP surgery number. If you are clinically at higher risk for a particular disease, ask your GP or specialist now what you should do in an outbreak.

03 **Agree a doorstep support plan**

Decide who would collect shopping or prescriptions if you should not go out, and how they would leave it at the door. Set up online grocery or pharmacy accounts while you are well. Note neighbours who may need the same help from you.

04 **Stay up to date with routine vaccines**

Vaccination is still one of the most effective ways to prevent many infectious diseases. Use the NHS vaccination schedule, your GP or a pharmacist, and TravelHealthPro before trips abroad. In winter, take up flu or other seasonal vaccines you are offered.

05 **Practise the hygiene that actually works**

Soap and clean running water for 20 seconds, especially after the toilet, before food, after coughing or sneezing, and after contact with animals. Hand sanitiser helps when hands are not visibly dirty, but it does not deal well with everything (including norovirus) — use soap and water when you can. Teach children the same habits (UKHSA's e-Bug resources can help).

06 **Know who is usually at higher risk**

This varies by disease, but often includes older adults, babies and young children, pregnant people, and anyone with a weakened immune system or a long-term condition. Plan how you would keep them safer in the household if someone becomes unwell.

DURING

IF YOU ARE ASKED TO STAY HOME, OR YOU ARE UNWELL

01 **Follow the official advice for that disease**
Isolation length, testing, and whether household contacts must stay in will be set at the time. Read NHS and gov.uk pages, not screenshots. If you are unwell, stay home and avoid contact with others. Some illnesses have specific exclusion periods — the NHS lists these.

02 **Reduce spread inside the home**
Wash hands often. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and bin it. Clean surfaces people touch a lot, and toilets. Let fresh air in. If you can, sleep in a separate room and use a separate bathroom; if not, clean between uses and do not share towels, cups or cutlery. Avoid preparing food for others while you are infectious, if that is practical.

03 **Use the NHS the way they ask you to**
Start with 111.nhs.uk or NHS 111 unless it is an emergency. Say if you may have an infectious illness so they can tell you how to attend. Call 999 for severe difficulty breathing, collapse, a seizure, or another immediate danger. Continue regular medicines unless a clinician tells you to stop.

04 **Look after minds as well as bodies**
Two weeks at home is easier with a daily routine, daylight, movement, and planned calls or messages. If you are working or studying from home, agree expectations early. If mood, isolation or caring responsibilities become too much, use NHS mental health pages, your GP, or Samaritans on 116 123.

05 **Do not ignore other emergencies**
You can still have a power cut, a flood or a medical problem that is unrelated. Keep your Three Day Kit, torch, radio and paper contacts usable. If you must leave the home because it is unsafe, that comes first — tell the emergency services if you have been asked to isolate.

AFTER

WHEN YOU ARE WELL, OR RESTRICTIONS LIFT

01 **Return carefully and restock**
Follow official advice on when you can mix again. Rest, then replace food, medicines and hygiene supplies. Wash clothes and clean the rooms you used while unwell. If you had a confirmed infection and need a fit note, time off or benefits advice, use official NHS and gov.uk pages or Citizens Advice.

02 **Keep the useful habits**
Handwashing, ventilation, a small buffer of food and an up-to-date prescription habit are worth keeping between outbreaks. Note what you ran short of, and adjust the kit.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Start with a Three Day Kit — water, no-cook food, torch, radio, power bank, cash, medicines and a contacts list — then stretch the food, toiletries, soap, pain relief and pet supplies towards 14 days. Add a thermometer, any testers or masks officially recommended at the time, and ready-to-feed formula if needed. This is a household cupboard plan, not a reason to bulk-buy at other people's expense.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Food, toiletries and pet food that could last up to 14 days, built up gradually
- [ ] Repeat prescriptions requested at least 5 working days before they run out
- [ ] Doorstep plan: who would drop shopping or prescriptions
- [ ] Soap, cleaning supplies and (as a back-up) hand sanitiser in the house
- [ ] Routine and seasonal vaccines up to date, as offered by the NHS
- [ ] Plan to ventilate rooms and not share towels if someone is unwell
- [ ] Mental-health contacts saved (GP, NHS, Samaritans 116 123)
- [ ] Bottled water, or confidence in a reliable tap supply
- [ ] Written list of medicines, doses, GP and pharmacy numbers
- [ ] Online grocery or pharmacy accounts set up while well
- [ ] Thermometer and basic pain relief or fever relief already used by the household
- [ ] Household understands current official advice will come from NHS / UKHSA / gov.uk
- [ ] People at higher risk in or near the household noted, with a check-in plan
- [ ] Three Day Kit still ready for a power cut or other emergency during a stay-home spell

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Severe difficulty breathing, collapse, or another immediate danger.

NHS 111
111
Urgent medical advice. Start at 111.nhs.uk if you can.

NHS HEALTH INFORMATION
nhs.uk
Symptoms, isolation, vaccines and exclusion periods for specific diseases.

UKHSA / GOV.UK
gov.uk
Official outbreak and public-health updates. Use these, not forwarded messages.

YOUR GP AND PHARMACY
On your records
Repeat prescriptions and clinical advice if you are at higher risk.

SAMARITANS
116 123
Free, 24-hour listening support.

PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER
thepsr.co.uk
If a stay-home period coincides with a utility outage.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Infectious-disease pages on the Prepare / Be Ready campaign site.

SOURCES

Guidance in this booklet was checked against publicly available official advice in November 2026. Always follow the latest instructions from the emergency services and the links below.

1. UK government Prepare / Be Ready, infectious disease outbreaks — beready.campaign.gov.uk
2. UK Health Security Agency and NHS guidance on staying at home when unwell, vaccines, hand and respiratory hygiene — ukhsa.gov.uk and nhs.uk
3. NHS, repeat prescriptions and when to call 111 or 999 — nhs.uk
4. UKHSA e-Bug resources for teaching children about hygiene — e-bug.eu
5. TravelHealthPro and NHS travel vaccination guidance for trips abroad

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication. Isolation rules are set at the time of an outbreak and this guide does not replace them.