



Info Sheet 2: What makes a person more vulnerable to Covid19?

Covid19 is a new virus so what we know about how it affects people is changing rapidly. Current evidence suggests that individuals with certain pre-existing medical conditions, or who are taking certain medications, may be at an increased risk from Covid19.

'Increased risk' can mean a person is more likely than others to become infected with the virus, and/or they are more likely to experience more severe symptoms.

The evidence to date suggests that children are less likely than adults to have severe symptoms and that most children have either no symptoms or a mild upper respiratory (breathing) illness with no major problems. It is important to remember that mildly affected people will still be infectious and that some infected people may have no symptoms. Older people may however be more susceptible to the virus, particularly the elderly.

The UK government currently has **3 levels of risk** for Covid19:

1. 'Very high risk' – sometimes termed '**extremely vulnerable**' people (around 1-1.5 million people in the UK)
2. 'High risk' – sometimes termed '**vulnerable**' people (around 19 million people in the UK)
3. General population risk – everyone else

What do the different levels of risk mean for daily life?

1. The current advice is that people who are **Extremely Vulnerable to Covid19 (Group 1)** should have '**shielding**' for **12 weeks**. This means they should avoid any face-to-face contact with others and avoid going out, even to buy food and essentials. Only visits from people who provide needed support should happen – that means healthcare, support with daily needs or social care. Shielding is explained in more detail in **Info sheet 4**.

A person who is shielded will need help from family, friends or neighbours, or from the government's local assistance scheme. You can sign up at www.Gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable If you do not have access to the internet please ask a friend, neighbour or support worker to help sign you up or telephone 0800 028 8327.

2. At present, those who are **Vulnerable to Covid19 (Group 2)** and **everyone else in the population (Group 3)** should **all practice strict social distancing**. This means they should only go out for needed supplies (food, medical appointments or to get medications) and to exercise once a day. They should stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) from other people at all times. They should follow the strict hand-washing technique and do this often.

This guidance may change again in due course – check the following link for up to date guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>