

Going Out After Shielding or Self-Isolating

If you have been at home for an extended period of time, going back out to do shopping, socialise, run errands or take public transport can be daunting. Here are some tips to give you a better idea of what to expect, and what preparations you can make in order to stay safe and enjoy getting out and about again.

You still need to self-isolate for 10 days if you or anyone in your household has coronavirus symptoms.

Plan your visit

Shops and service providers are generally very well equipped to support social distancing and hygiene, but there are a few specific considerations for customers to be aware of:



- You may have to queue outside for a few minutes
- Remember that you will need to wear a face covering when visiting indoor spaces
- It can be useful to call ahead to the shop or place you are visiting and ask what their busiest times are and whether they have seating and shelter available. Many cafes and restaurants require booking in advance.
- Use the First Bus app to find out how many people are currently travelling on buses
- If you need to pay for your bus ticket, you will need the correct change or a contactless card or payment app

Take small steps towards going back to all of your usual errands

We are all getting used to new ways of doing things, and trips out taking longer than usual. Consider whether the amenities closest to you can meet your needs so that you don't have to travel far. Some shops **may not have toilets available** if they haven't been able to make them safe. Expect a variation in what different businesses are doing to comply with social distancing guidelines. It may take a few visits to shops and other spaces before you feel used to looking at **physical distancing markers** on the floor, **signs** at the entrance and **one-way systems**.

Check whether shops offer priority hours

As of July 2020, several supermarkets offer protected times for vulnerable people and those over 70, including

Tesco (9:00–10:00 Mon, Weds and Fri),
Sainsbury's (8:00–9:00 Mon, Weds and Fri),
Aldi (30 minutes before opening Mon–Sat),
Co-op (8:00–9:00 Mon–Sat),
Marks & Spencer (first hour on a Monday),
and **Waitrose** (first hour of opening every day)



Most supermarket chains have guidance on their website around their busiest hours – this tends to be around 11:00–3:00 each day. Call your local store or visit their website to find out more.

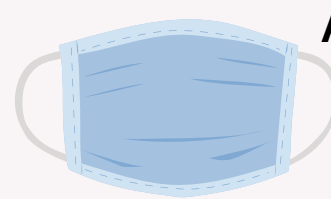
Keep your hands clean

When at home, especially before leaving or when returning, **washing your hands for 20 seconds with hand wash or soap** is important, 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.



Face coverings are now mandatory

in shops, banks, post offices, cinemas, libraries places of worship and on public transport. By wearing one, you protect others. Staff are not legally required to wear them and may use visors or screens instead. You can use a disposable covering, a reusable fabric one, or a scarf as long as it **securely covers your nose and mouth**. Always dispose of single-use coverings safely and wash fabric ones after each use. If you cannot get hold of one, contact



Age UK Bristol on 0117 929 7537. If you wear glasses, position them on top of the covering to prevent them fogging up and **keep some lens wipes handy**.

There are exemptions to wearing face coverings

People who cannot put on, take off or wear a face covering due to **illness or disability**, or who would find wearing one distressing, do not have to obey the rule. If you **lip read** and have a carer, they also do not have to wear one. If you have a hidden disability, you can use a **sunflower card or lanyard** from **hidden disabilities** (hiddendisabilitiesstore.com) to indicate this to staff. If you are blind or partially sighted you can also contact Vision West of England at support@visionwofe.org.uk or call 0117 322 4885 for a lanyard.



You may be asked to give your name and contact details

when visiting cafes, pubs, restaurants, hairdressers, dentists and other indoor spaces. The details will be kept for 21 days and are to help the government's 'test and trace' system to identify local outbreaks quickly and protect residents. They won't be passed on to anyone else.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

If you find it difficult to communicate with staff wearing face coverings, cannot see the distance markers, need a seat provided in the queue, or need extra time to pay and pack your shopping, staff should be ready to meet these needs. Do not feel that you are being burdensome if the measures do not work for you.

Remember that your doctor is still there for you

The virus has meant that the NHS has been under extra pressure, and hospitals and surgeries have had to change the way they work. But **your health needs are just as important** and the NHS has made sure that care is still available to anyone who needs it. If you become unwell, you can still speak to your GP, though this **may be on the phone rather than face to face**.



Do not go to the surgery in person unless you have been advised to, but do give them a ring or visit their website if you need to see the doctor.