

“Now that lockdown is easing, that must mean it’s safe to go out again.”

There is still no cure or vaccine for the virus, and it is still making people very ill (that’s why not all scientists and doctors agree lockdown should be eased). The only thing that has changed is that the spread of the disease has slowed, so there is more room in hospitals. The lockdown could tighten up again at any time if too many people get ill again.

“If other people can go out, so can I!”

The lockdown is only easing for very specific things. For example if you need to work and cannot work at all from home, you can leave the house for work – but if you don’t have a job to get to then you don’t need to leave.

If you have a health problem like asthma, COPD, Hepatitis, Diabetes, or are newly-diagnosed with HIV and haven’t been in treatment for it very long, you are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from covid and so should avoid leaving your flat – probably even more so given more people are out.

“But people are going out without masks and hanging out with their friends in the park – I don’t see why I can’t do the same.”

People do a lot of things that aren’t safe or good for them – it doesn’t mean it’s OK, it just means they’re putting themselves at risk.

“Lockdown’s been going on for ages, I’m bored now.”

Nobody wants to stay cooped up at home, but the more people ignore the rules now, the longer it will drag on.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

We’ve all been hearing lots of different things about coronavirus and lockdown recently. Here are the basics you need to know.

What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus (also called covid) is a new virus that recently spread to the UK. It causes various problems that doctors are still learning about, but the biggest ones they know about so far are with breathing. People with covid usually have a fever and a really bad cough, and can have such problems breathing properly that need hospital treatment. This can lead to people needing to be put on ventilators, machines to breathe for them. In some cases, when the machines do not help the person recover fully, people can die.

The main symptoms to look out for are a dry cough that doesn’t go away, a very sore throat, a high temperature, and losing your sense of taste.

How does it spread?

- When someone with the virus breathes out droplets. This can happen through breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing. This is how it spreads between people face-to-face.
 - This is why social distancing is important, to keep further away from people than these droplets can spread.
 - This is why we need to wear face-masks. They cover the nose and mouth, stopping you spreading it to others if you have it and helping stop you getting it if you haven't.
- When someone with the virus touches something (like a door handle, pole on a bus, cigarette or packet in a shop) and leaves some of the virus behind, which someone else then picks up by touching the same thing. This is how it spreads around the city without face-to-face contact.
 - This is why we need to wash our hands thoroughly, so that if we've picked up the virus from somewhere we get it off our hands. It's also why it's important to regularly clean things that you touch a lot, especially coming in from outside (like door-handles and light-switches).

CORONAVIRUS

MYTHBUSTING

People are saying a lot of things about covid and lockdown, but many of these are wrong. Here are some of the most common myths that have been going around.

“Don't worry, I haven't got it. I'd know if I had the virus!”

The only way anyone could know this if they had just been tested and given the results on the spot! You can't tell by looking at someone and you can't tell by guessing yourself.

People can have the virus without knowing it, and can carry it and spread it for weeks before they get a cough or feel ill themselves. Some people can even have the virus and not get ill at all, so there is no way of knowing who has it.

→ That's why we have to keep our distance, wear masks when and wash our hands – because we can't tell who's got it, we have to be as careful as if everyone has it.

→ Remember this works both ways – so you could have the virus and give it to someone else without knowing too. This is another reason why staff wear masks, because we don't want to accidentally give it to a client.