



Factsheet 19

Updated on 23 October 2020

Advice for people who have asthma during the second wave of COVID-19

Introduction

Supporting people with asthma has never been more important as we head into the winter season and a second wave of the pandemic.

So, what advice can you give people with asthma to avoid being exposed to the virus and stop the spread? Let's have a look at these in detail:

- Maintain social distancing – keeping two metres apart from people.
- Plan support ahead of time for their daily routine, if they feel the spread of the virus is causing significant disruption to their life or they get symptoms and need to self-isolate. This may include getting food, medication and other essential items.
- Maintain good personal hygiene by washing their hands regularly with soap and water for a duration of 20 seconds.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue and dispose of it immediately, or sneeze or cough into their elbow/sleeve where appropriate.
- Clean regularly touched surfaces.
- Wear a face covering in enclosed spaces.

Please note additional advice and guidance may need to be sought in line with local tier restrictions. Further guidance can be found [here](#)

It is important to advise people with asthma that some COVID-19 symptoms can resemble symptoms of an asthma attack, such as cough and shortness of breath. However, changes in taste or smell and/or a high temperature are uncommon in an asthma attack and therefore these symptoms are likely to resemble the COVID-19 infection.¹

Should these symptoms be present then the government advice should be followed (please see [factsheet 18](#) for more information).



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What other advice should be provided to people with asthma during the pandemic?

The best way of staying healthy and recovering if infected with COVID-19 is to ensure their asthma remains as stable as possible. This means:

- To continue to use all the medicines used in the treatment of their asthma as prescribed. Remind people with asthma (where appropriate) that there is no evidence that inhaled steroids increase the risk of getting COVID-19.³
- In any eventuality, people with asthma should always be recommended to follow their personalized asthma action plan.³
- It is important for people to have their inhaler technique checked regularly to ensure full pharmacological effect as well as reduce side effects. This can be done by checking technique through video consultations and/or signposting people who have asthma to the following [video](#)¹ to help them do this.

As the number of infections of COVID-19 rise, people with asthma may become increasingly concerned and anxious. Remember that strong emotions can trigger an asthma attack.

Therefore, you may need to signpost people with asthma to **resources** that support them to manage stress and anxiety.

¹ COVID-19 – BTS Guidance Collection – Asthma Exacerbations NECS medicines optimization Available at :<https://medicines.necu.nhs.uk/covid-19-bts-guidance-collection-asthma-exacerbations/>

² Asthma UK How to use your inhaler? <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/>

³ Advice for Healthcare Professionals Treating People with Asthma (adults) in relation to COVID-19. Available on: <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-information-for-the-respiratory-community/>