 

**Covid-19: Helpful Advice - Part 4**

**August 2021**

Wales is now remerging from most of the restrictions that have been in place for quite a long time. Whilst the pandemic is still not over, we need to **continue to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.** The government uses different alert levels to let people know the risks in the community from the virus. From August 7th, 2021 Wales will be at alert level 0. So, what does this mean? How does it affect you?

For more information on the new restrictions that apply to the whole of Wales, please click on the links below

[Alert level 0: summary | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/alert-level-0-summary)

For the rules or guidance in the other parts of the UK, please visit the sites for [**England,**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance) [**Scotland**](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/) and [**Northern Ireland**](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)

We have put together information on the latest regulations on our website [AutismWales.org/en/news/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/](https://autismwales.org/en/news/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/)and we share useful information on Facebook [www.facebook.com/AutismWales](http://www.facebook.com/AutismWales) and Twitter [twitter.com/autismwales](https://twitter.com/autismwales) too. We try to keep our information up to date, so all the latest information is there for you to use.

**You may still be feeling** anxious after many months of restrictions and rules. This is understandable and it may take some time to settle back into a more relaxed way of doing things. There are some things you may want to do that will make you feel a little safer.

Here are some tips that may help:

1. **When you leave your home think through the following questions:**

**Where am I going?**

It is worth looking at what time might be a little quieter to get you used to being out in the community again– if food shopping, is late afternoon quieter, or might the shops be cleaner first thing in the morning, but they might be busier? There are online sites that can give you some of that information.

**What do I need to take with me?**

Make a list of useful things you might need, e.g. hand sanitiser; a face mask; if you are going shopping, a shopping list.

**Am I going on my own, or with someone?**

Would it help to have someone with you? You can take someone with you if you need extra help and support.

**How am I going to get there?**

Can you walk, or will you need to use transport? Plan your route before you go and if you are going to walk how many bags could you carry if you buy shopping? Is it a long walk from the bus stop, are you sure which stop you will need to get off? If you are going on public transport remember you must still wear a face covering unless you are exempt [Alert level 0: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/alert-level-0-frequently-asked-questions#section-77042) .

1. **Use good hygiene rules**

Before you leave home, wash your hands with soap and water. Take hand sanitiser with you to use if you cannot use soap and water when you are out. When you return home always wash your hands straight away, again using soap and water. If you must cough or sneeze, use a tissue, or cough into your elbow, if you haven’t got a tissue. Remember to throw your tissue into general rubbish straight away.

1. **Safety equipment**

**Masks or face coverings**

In Wales, we **have** to wear ‘face coverings’ in some public places including; almost all public transport, shops and health and social care settings. The use of face coverings in education will be determined at a local level.

Face coverings are not a legal requirement in hospitality settings, like restaurants, pubs and cafes, where food and drink is served.  Those businesses may, however, still ask you to wear a face covering in certain parts of the premises as they have a legal duty to put in place measures to reduce risks.

Some people do not have to wear face coverings – they are ‘exempt’. We have information about who is exempt and how they can let other people know that they do not have to wear a face covering here: [AutismWales.org/resource/New\_Laws\_Guidance\_Face\_Masks\_A4\_English\_20200804.pdf](https://autismwales.org/resource/New_Laws_Guidance_Face_Masks_A4_English_20200804.pdf)

[AutismWales.org/resource/Orange\_Wallet\_Print\_Face\_Covering\_Inserts\_2020\_final\_eng.doc](https://autismwales.org/resource/Orange_Wallet_Print_Face_Covering_Inserts_2020_final_eng.doc)

Some people are wearing a sunflower lanyard to show everyone that they are exempt, and the sunflower symbol is becoming far more widely recognised. You can find out more about the scheme and purchase sunflowers lanyards here [hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/](https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/)

If you do wear a face covering or mask, then it is important that you fit it and remove it properly and that it covers your nose and mouth. The mask is there so that you do not cough or sneeze over someone else. Try not to keep touching your face and adjusting the mask if you can.

When you put your mask/face covering on, always use the ear loops. If it is disposable, then make sure that you put it in a bag and throw it in your general rubbish. If you have a reusable mask, always wash it after every use and as soon as you get home.

1. **When you are out of your home**

If you feel unsafe because people are not keeping their distance **do not panic**. Politely ask the person to give you more space. If you still feel that there isn’t enough room for you to feel safe move to another place in the shop, path or building. Some people might ignore you; some people will listen. You can wear a badge or lanyard to let people know that you need people to stay 2m away from you – this can be for lots of reasons. You do not have to tell people why ([gov.wales/optional-badges-and-lanyards-promote-ongoing-social-distancing](https://gov.wales/optional-badges-and-lanyards-promote-ongoing-social-distancing)). Some shops, venues and even churches may still have arrows to show people the route they need to take around the building. There may even be a separate entrance to go in and out. If you are unsure about this, ask a member of staff, or someone who has a badge as a ‘helper’ to explain it to you. In some places you will still be asked for your contact details. This is so they can contact you if they need to. This is known as the trace, test and protect system. Fully vaccinated adults, (those who have had both doses of the vaccine), under 18s and vaccine trial participants will not need to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus.

If you are somewhere and you are uncomfortable because there are lots of people around, **do not panic.** Before you leave your home think about where you will be going and if there are other places you could go if you find lots of people at the place where you had planned to go. It is helpful to think of several places you could go that are quite close together, so you can easily change where you go, if you feel uncomfortable. Or choose places you know that have lots of space near your home.

**When you return to your home**

* When you return home wash your hands straight away.
* If it makes you feel less anxious wipe any items that you have bought with anti-bacterial cleaner or wipes as you unpack them.
* When you have packed away the items, wash your hands again.
1. **Who can visit your home?**

There are no longer any legal limits on the number of people that can meet in each other’s homes. However, you should still think about the risks of having people in your home and consider how you can minimise those risks.

We need to continue doing those things we know protect us and others. For example:

* If possible, meet people in your garden or outdoors.
* Wash your hands frequently and sneeze into tissues you throw away.
* Get fresh air flowing indoors by opening windows and doors.
* Limit the number of people you meet at any one occasion, the amount of time you spend with people and maintain physical distancing where you can.

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| **Easy tips*** **Plan –** know what you want to do and where you are going to go before you leave the house.
* If you are shopping **make a list of what you need,** where and when you are going to go.
* What do you need to **take** with you?
* **Find out when the quietest times to go might be –** do you know when it will be really busy? Do you have to go at these times?
* **If you are not sure about something when you arrive, look to see if there is someone ‘official’ to ask** or a member of staff. That will probably be someone in a uniform or *will be stood at the entrance to somewhere.*
* If people are too close to you when you are there **‘don’t panic’.** Politely ask people if they can give you more space.
* **If you feel uncomfortable somewhere, plan what you are going to do before you go –** are you going to leave? Are you going to go somewhere else or go home? Are you going to just go to another part of the shop or park etc.?
* **Remember good hygiene is still really important –** wash your hands using soap and water for 20 seconds ([www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/)). Take hand sanitiser with you in case you cannot get to soap and water once you leave the **house.**
* **Make an easy plan before you go and then you will feel less anxious when you leave your home.**
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