



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University



# A GUIDE TO SELF-ISOLATING

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# 1. SELF-ISOLATING – WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You are likely to need to self-isolate for either 10 or 14 days depending on your situation. This is known as “self-isolating”.

Click on the link below to find out more or follow the guidance given to you by the NHS or the university directly.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>

**While you are self-isolating, it is important that:**

- You must not leave your accommodation apart from in exceptional circumstances, such as if you require urgent medical assistance
- Where possible, you should have any food and medicines delivered to your accommodation
- You must only exercise within your home or garden
- You must not have any visitors (unless they are providing care or emergency assistance e.g. if you become very unwell or need care at home)
- If you are living in shared accommodation, you must stay 2 metres apart from others at all times and avoid shared areas.



## 2. STAYING CONNECTED

Research shows that keeping in touch with others has huge benefits for our physical and mental health. As moving to a university can feel overwhelming and isolating at the best of times, it is more important than ever to prioritise connecting with others if you are self-isolating upon arrival. Although face-to-face contact isn't possible during this period, try to maintain contact with family and friends using social media and apps like FaceTime, Skype, Viber and WhatsApp.

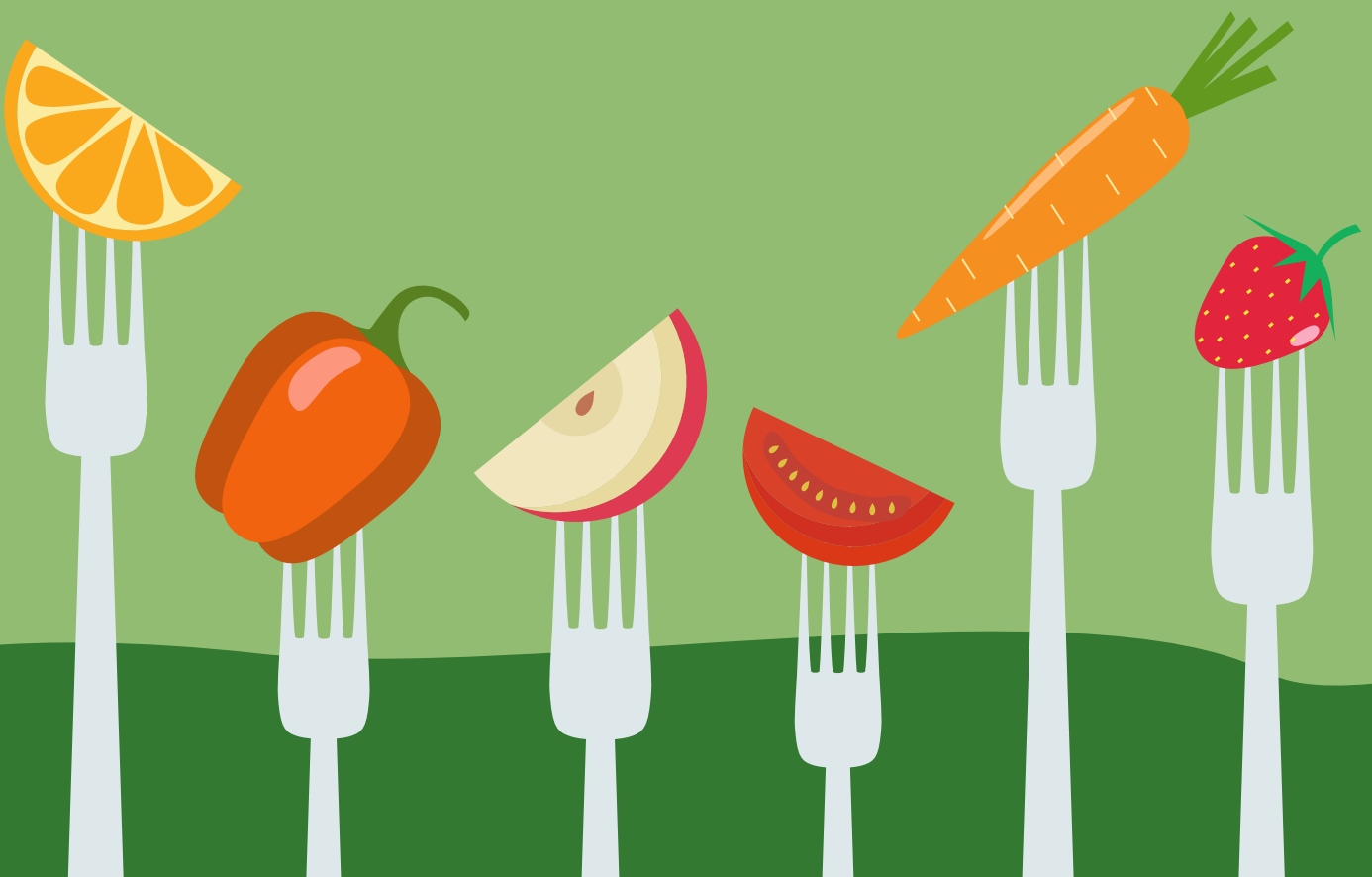
Birmingham City University's Students' Union also has over 100 student societies and clubs dedicated to a wide range of interests including sport, faith, and campaigning and music. While you are self-isolating, why not do some research about these societies to think about which ones you might get involved with when your self-isolation period ends? You can find a list of the different societies on offer [here](#).



# 3. EATING WELL

Having a balanced diet is not only important for your physical health, but research increasingly suggests that your diet can also impact your mental health and wellbeing. Enjoying a balanced diet, which means eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions for you, can help you feel your best. As a guide, the [Eat Well](#) guide from the NHS (National Health Service) in the UK advises that you should:

- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day (these should make up just over a third of your diet)
- Choose higher fibre starchy foods like potatoes, bread, rice or pasta (these should make up just over a third of your diet)
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks)
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat them in small amounts
- Drink plenty of fluids (at least 6-8 glasses per day)



# 4. GETTING FOOD IN ISOLATION

## How to order groceries to be delivered

*Morrisons is just one of many supermarkets that offer this service.*

1. [www.morrisons.co.uk](http://www.morrisons.co.uk)
2. Click register in top right hand corner.
3. Sign up using your personal details and accept the terms and conditions.
4. Click on choose a delivery slot.
5. Enter your postcode.
6. In the house number/name box ensure you include your **BLOCK, FLAT number and ROOM number**. For example: University Locks Block B, Flat 3, Room 8.
7. Click save address.
8. You can then select a delivery slot.
9. Once you have selected a time and date, click on continue shopping.
10. You can then browse all the groceries available  
– you can also order household items, stationery and health and beauty products.
11. Once you have all your items in the basket, simply click the basket in the top right hand corner and follow the payment instructions.

## Other supermarkets that offer similar delivery services and products include:

- [Tesco](#)
- [Sainsburys](#)
- [Iceland](#)
- [Waitrose](#)
- Wingyip Chinese supermarket also deliver. More information can be found here: [Wingyip](#)

Remember it is a good idea to order non-perishable items too, so that you have reserves.

## NHS Volunteer Responders

NHS Volunteer Responders are also available if you need help collecting shopping, medication or would like a telephone 'check-in and chat'. Call **0808 196 3646** (8am to 8pm) to arrange volunteer support. You can arrange one-off support, or schedule more regular help whilst you are self-isolating. You can find more information on [nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk/](http://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk/)

## How to order meals to be delivered

You can order fresh food through apps and websites including Uber Eats, Deliveroo and Just Eat. Like the supermarkets, they will ask for some personal details in order to register with the service. It is a simple way of getting a meal delivered straight to your door! Each of these apps offer a wide variety of cuisines to suit all budgets.

Contact your accommodation provider to find out how they can support you with getting your food delivery to your door.



# 5. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There is lots of research that shows that exercise can reduce your risk of illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer. Physical activity can also help your mental health. For example, it can help you get better sleep, improve your mood and help you to manage stress, anxiety and intrusive thoughts.

Being physically active means moving our bodies. You are more likely to exercise regularly if you chose an activity that you enjoy and that fits into your daily life. The NHS recommends that you should do some type of physical activity every day, and at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week. Check out some examples of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous exercise [here](#).

Self-isolating doesn't mean you can't enjoy exercise! There are lots of fitness channels specialising in different forms of exercise available on YouTube. These channels usually have something to suit people of all fitness levels.

**Some of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team's favourites include:**

- [BCU Sport](#) (3 online sessions of High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) from our very own Sport, Strength and Conditioning Coach Francesco Dimundo)
- [BCU Sport: Yoga with Antonia](#) (hour long yoga sessions with Birmingham-based yoga teacher, Antonia)
- [Adapt to Perform](#) (a variety of workouts for wheelchair users including HIIT, circuit, yoga and strength workouts)
- [HASFit](#) (over 1000 workout routines including cardio, HIIT and strength training)
- [Yoga with Adriene](#) (yoga sessions for people of all abilities, including beginners)
- [The Fitness Marshall](#) (fun dance workouts to all your favourite pop songs)
- [FitnessBlender](#) (over 500 different workouts including 5 quick 5 minute workouts)
- [Oti Mabuse Official](#) (learn to dance with professional dancer and Strictly Come Dancing star Oti Mabuse)
- [Walk at Home](#) (low intensity walking workouts)



## 6. SLEEP

Sleep is so important for our physical and mental wellbeing. Try to wake up and go to sleep at the same time each day, as this will help your body maintain a regular sleeping pattern. Avoiding caffeine 8 hours before your bedtime can also help you sleep better, and remember that drinking alcohol can impact how well you sleep. Eating at regular times will also help strengthen your internal body clock, so avoid going to bed feeling too full, hungry or thirsty. As the blue light from electronic devices can stop the hormones which make us feel sleepy being released, try to avoid using electronic devices just before bed and avoid keeping them in your bedroom overnight.

## 7. WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

Mental health and wellbeing is just as important as physical health. The World Health Organization defines good mental health and wellbeing as:

““Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

Things like stress, external pressures and difficult life events like losing a loved one can impact our mental health and wellbeing and make us feel sad, worried, scared or overwhelmed. Most of us will experience mental health difficulties at some point in our lives. Some people will also experience mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder or psychosis.





# 8. MENTAL HEALTH IN THE UK AND AROUND THE WORLD

According to the UK-based mental health charity, [Mind](#), 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year in England. Research also suggests that students in the UK are increasingly reporting mental health difficulties. People with mental health difficulties in the UK continue to face some stigma due to common misconceptions about mental health. However, attitudes to mental health in the UK are changing thanks to movements such as the [Time to Change](#) campaign to end mental health discrimination. The law in England and Wales also protects people with mental health problems from being discriminated against. Remember, if you are experiencing mental health difficulties, **you are not alone and it is important to get support.**

Different cultures have different attitudes to mental health. Research has shown that a person's cultural background will influence whether or not a person will seek help if they are struggling with their mental health, what type of help they seek, what kind of coping style and social support they have, and how much stigma they attach to mental illness. In some cultures, mental illness isn't talked about or is viewed as being "made up", while in others, some mental illnesses are viewed as supernatural phenomena or spiritual experiences. Regardless of your cultural background, if you are struggling with your mental health there is help and support available to you in the UK. You can read Sonam's story of mental health being dismissed in her South Asian culture [here](#).



# 9. BEING LONELY

Being lonely is the feeling we get when we need to have meaningful social contact with others. It is not the same as being alone, and it is possible to feel lonely even if you spend lots of time with other people. Feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health, especially if you feel lonely for a long time.

When you are self-isolating, especially if you have just arrived at University for the first time, it might feel more difficult to have contact with others. As well as keeping in touch with friends and family via telephone, Skype, WhatsApp, Viber and FaceTime, it might help to access some additional help. For example, [Student Space](#) is a service which offers dedicated support for students, including telephone and text support, if you are experiencing difficulties including loneliness.

If you are feeling lonely and/or isolated, you can also get support from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team through a virtual appointment via telephone or Microsoft Teams. To get a virtual appointment with a Mental Health or Wellbeing Adviser, register with our service [here](#).



# 10. ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING RESOURCES

If you find yourself feeling sad, worried or overwhelmed while you are self-isolating (or at any other time!), there are lots of resources available to help you online:

- [Student Space](#) is a service which offers dedicated support for students, including telephone and text support, if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety, loneliness and relationship issues.
- [Togetherall](#) is an online space where you can access support if you're experiencing anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues.
- [Kooth](#) is an online mental wellbeing community where you can access free, safe and anonymous support in discussion boards or chatting with one of the Kooth team. You can also write in your own daily journal to track your feelings.
- The mental health charity, Mind, offers an online community called [Side by Side](#) where you can share your experiences of mental health and connect with others who understand what you're going through.
- [Samaritans](#) are a charity that offer listening support 24 hours per day, 7 days a week by calling **116 123**. It is free to call. Alternatively, you can also access support by emailing [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org).

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness, the practice of being in the present moment, is an evidence-based way of reducing stress, anxiety and promoting wellbeing. There are lots of free resources online to help you practise mindfulness:

- [mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk](http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk) is a site dedicated specifically to students which has lots of tools to help you
- BCU Students can access Headspace Plus, an app offering meditation and mindfulness exercises, for free by registering with your university email address [here](#)
- Headspace also offer free mini meditations on their [YouTube channel](#) which can help you practise mindfulness
- Other YouTube channels, such as [The Honest Guys- Meditations- Relaxation](#) also offer free meditations to help you relax

# 11. WHERE TO GO IF YOU NEED MORE HELP

Links to support services for other issues, including drug/alcohol misuse and domestic abuse, can be found on the iCity pages for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team [here](#). Wellbeing and Mental Health Advisers can also signpost you to more specialist support services. If you feel that you need some support but you're not sure where to go, register with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team and we can offer you an appointment via telephone or Microsoft Teams. To access the registration form, click [here](#).

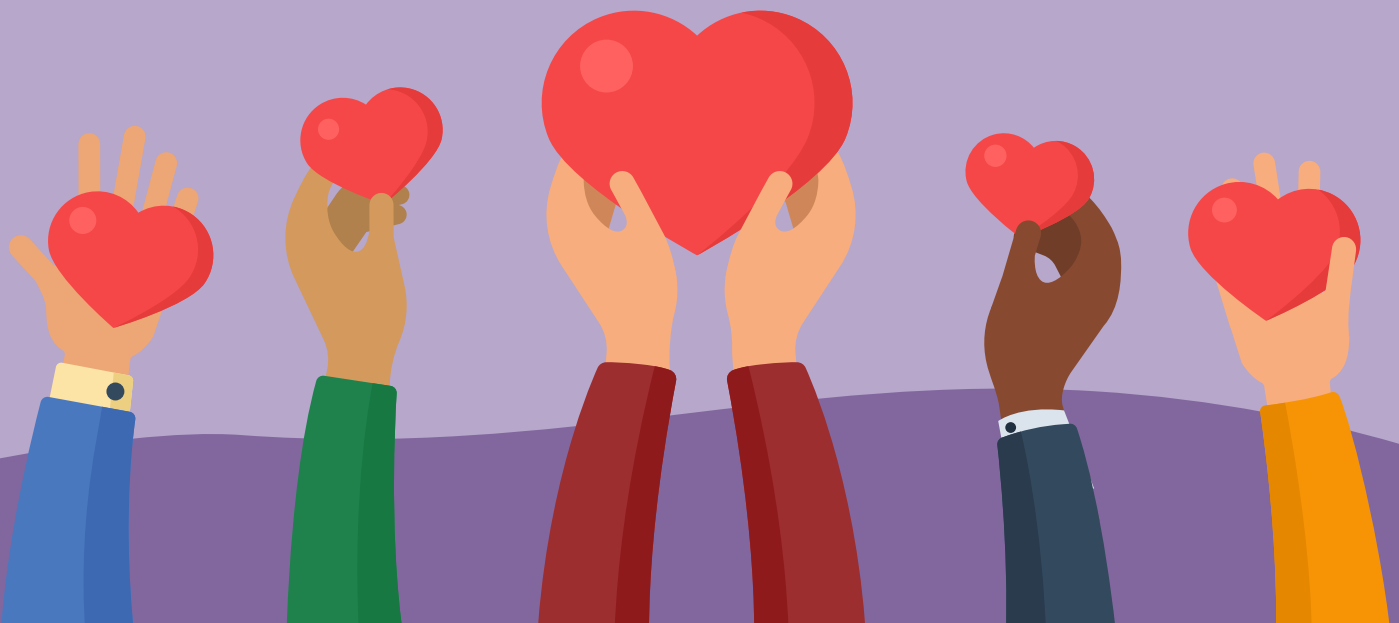
You can also find resources, including some non-English language resources, specifically for international students [here](#).

## The Mental Health and Wellbeing Team

Birmingham City University's Mental Health and Wellbeing Team offer support to all students around their mental health and wellbeing. We can support you if you have concerns about your mental health, as well as if you are experiencing issues such as relationship difficulties, accommodation difficulties, healthy lifestyle, homesickness, experiences of abuse or assault, forced marriage and questions around sexuality and/or gender. If you have a mental health diagnosis, we can also make sure that you get the right support for your studies.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Team consists of counsellors, mental health advisers and wellbeing advisers. We offer free, confidential appointments 51 weeks of the year, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. We can offer **appointments via telephone or Microsoft Teams**, so please get in touch if you need support while you are self-isolating.

In order to arrange an initial appointment, please fill out our registration form. This will help us to allocate you to an appropriate adviser. To access the registration form, click [here](#).



# 12. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FROM THE NHS (NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE)

## GP support

You can also access support for your mental health via your GP (General Practitioner), which is a doctor who specialises in general medicine but can refer you to hospitals and other healthcare services for more specialist treatment. It is important to register with a GP within the first few weeks of arriving in Birmingham so that you can get medical advice and treatment easily and quickly when you need it. Most GPs are offering telephone appointments at the moment due to the covid-19 pandemic, so you can still access GP support while you are self-isolating if you need it. For more information about how the NHS works, including how to register with a GP, click [here](#).

## Support from NHS 111 and Mental Health Crisis Teams

If you need urgent help for your mental health but it's not an emergency, you can call your local NHS urgent mental health helpline 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. You can find your local helpline [here](#).

If you live in Birmingham or Solihull, you can call the Birmingham and Solihull Urgent Mental Health Helpline on **0121 262 3555**. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. You don't have to already be known to mental health services to access this service.

Forward Thinking Birmingham also offer a crisis line for young people aged up to 25 years living in Birmingham. Call **0300 300 0099** to speak to someone. You don't have to be registered with this service to call.

If you need help urgently for your mental health but it's not an emergency, and you're not able to speak to your local NHS urgent mental health helpline or you're not sure what to do:

- Ask for an urgent GP appointment or
- Call 111 or use the [NHS 111 online service](#)

## Getting help for your mental health in an emergency

If you are concerned that your life or someone else's life is at risk because:

- you or someone else is seriously injured/has taken an overdose
- you or someone else has intent and means to seriously injure/take an overdose
- you do not feel that you can keep yourself or someone else safe

**You should call 999 or go to an Accident & Emergency department immediately. A mental health emergency is just as serious as a physical one.**

# 13. ENTERTAINMENT

When you're self-isolating, it's important to take time out to rest and to enjoy yourself.

## TV and film

Watching TV programmes is a great way to relax, and will also help you to practise your English if you're not a native speaker. As well as international streaming services like [Netflix](#) and [Amazon Prime](#), some UK TV channels also offer an online TV service such as [BBC iPlayer](#), [ITV Hub](#) and [All 4](#). However be aware that, if you use BBC iPlayer or watch TV programmes on other online TV services live (i.e. at the same time as they are being broadcast on television), you will legally need to pay for a [TV licence](#).

## Podcasts

Why not try listening to some podcasts? If history is your thing, check out [You're Dead To Me](#) - a podcast that explores a range of topics from history with fun guests. Foodies might like [Off Menu](#) in which guests talk about their favourite food and food memories. [The Joy of x](#) might be of interest for the Mathematicians out there, while [The Receipts Podcast](#) has plenty of unadulterated girl talk. These are just a few suggestions, but there are so many out there to choose from.

## Online fun

Keep boredom at bay during self-isolation with these fun online activities:

- Have a go at an [online jigsaw puzzle](#)
- Learn a new language or brush up on your English skills using [Duolingo](#)
- Enjoy a virtual day at [Chester Zoo](#) and hang out with the animals
- Challenge yourself to a [word search](#)
- Spend some time enjoying a live stream of the stunning [Ponte delle Guglie in Venice](#)
- Take a virtual tour of London's famous [Natural History Museum](#)



# 14. WHAT IF I DEVELOP COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

If you develop covid-19 (coronavirus) symptoms while you're self-isolating:



## 1. Stay at home



## 4. Report your symptoms

As soon as you have requested a coronavirus test, complete a health and safety incident report using the [Notify](#) system.



## 2. Tell us

Immediately report to your cohort lead via telephone or email.



## 5. Isolation

You must follow government advice and self-isolate for at least 10 days.



## 3. Request a test

Immediately request a [Coronavirus Test](#)



## 6. Test result

Inform your university contact tracer as soon as you receive your coronavirus test results.

For more information about the approach to and guidance around Covid-19 (coronavirus) in the UK, have a look at our [Guide to Accessing Healthcare in the UK](#) [here](#).

You can also find the latest guidance from the UK government about Covid-19 [here](#).