



UK Health
Security
Agency

Letting fresh air in so that infections like COVID-19 and flu do not spread easily



Easy read booklet

July 2022

What is in this booklet

- Page 3 – 5 How letting fresh air in can help
- Page 6 – 7 How to let fresh air in where you live
- Page 8 Mechanical ventilation like air conditioning at home
- Page 9 What to do if someone in your home has a respiratory virus
- Page 10 & 11 Letting fresh air in where you work and when you travel

How letting fresh air in can help



Letting fresh air in can help viruses that cause infections like COVID-19 and flu to leave the room.



Letting fresh air in is also good for:

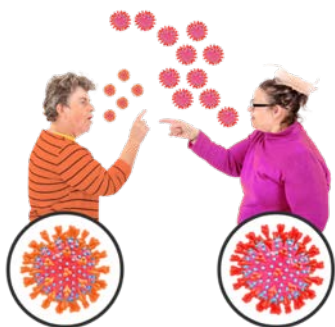
- sleep
- concentration
- staying healthy



If someone has a viral infection like COVID-19 or flu, they can spread the virus when they breathe, speak, cough or sneeze.

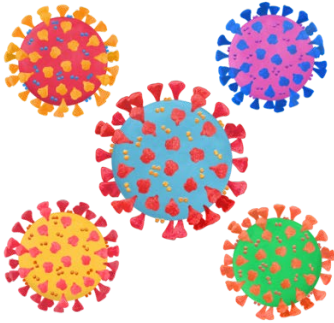
Someone else can become infected if they:

- breathe in the virus
- touch a surface that has tiny virus parts on there



The virus can stay in the room, even when a person with an infection has left.

How letting fresh air in can help



With no fresh air in the room, the virus parts can build up. So, it's better to let new air in, especially if there are lots of infected people in the room.



If people in a room are exercising, shouting, singing they can spread more virus parts in the air to other people. This means they could catch a virus like COVID-19 or flu.



Fresh air moving through a room does not stop you from getting a virus like COVID-19 or flu but it can help.



You can find out more information on how to [live safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)

How letting fresh air in can help



How you let fresh air in depends on where you live. For example, some buildings have:

- vents to let air in – this might be in the wall or chimney
- extractor fans
- air conditioning



It is most important to let fresh air into your home when:

- someone you live with has COVID-19 or another infection
- visitors come to your home



How to let fresh air in where you live



How you open your window depends on which windows you have.

Some windows open at the top and the bottom. This keeps air moving through your house. The cold air mixes with the warm air and stops draughts.



You can also open windows in different parts of a room or across your home so the air can flow easily.

Keep grilles or air vents open if you can. These are usually at the top of a window.



You do not have to keep your windows open all the time. You can open windows for a few minutes a day and still make a difference.

Opening windows does not mean it has to be cold. Make sure the temperature does not go below 18 degrees.

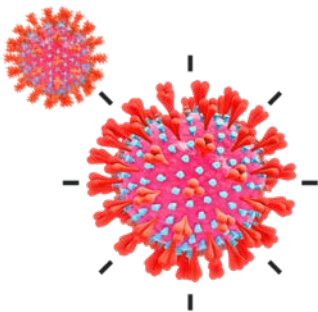


This is unsafe for older people over **65 years old**, younger people and anyone with a long term health condition.

How to let fresh air in where you live



In cold weather, you can still have ventilation and fresh air. Opening the window even a little bit will help to keep fresh air coming in so virus parts can leave the room.



If your windows open at the top and bottom, you can just have the top part open in winter. You can have both parts open in summer.



If you are finding it hard to heat your home, you might be able to claim some money back.

You can get advice to keep warm and well from the [Simple Energy advice website](#).



Or you can call **0800 444 202**

You can get advice about paying your energy bills from [Ofgem](#).

Always be careful if you leave or prop doors open to let air in. Do not prop fire doors open to let in air.

Mechanical ventilation like air conditioning at home



You might have **mechanical ventilation** where you live. This means things like air conditioning.

You should check this is working well and follow any instructions. Try to set the system to only bring fresh air in to the room.



Don't let old air move around the room as this can spread virus parts.

If you have **mechanical ventilation** you can boost the mode so that more air goes through the house.



This helps anyone in the home who has a respiratory infection like COVID-19 or flu.

You can leave fans running in the

- bathroom
- kitchen
- toilets



Try to do this after someone has left the room if they have a virus.

What to do if someone in your home has a respiratory virus

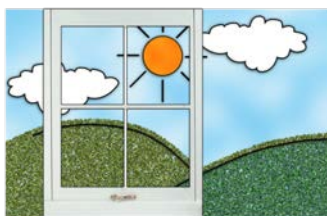


If someone at home has a respiratory virus like COVID-19 or flu, you should:

- open the window a little in their room
- keep their door closed



This will help to stop the virus spreading. If the person has to use the kitchen or bathroom, they should do this on their own and keep the window open.



Keep the window in the room open after the person leaves for about 10 minutes so virus parts can leave the room.



If you have air conditioning or another ventilation machine, keep it running at a high level or a boost mode – if you have this.

You can keep the fan on in the bathroom or kitchen, if you have one.

[Read guidance for people who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19.](#)

Letting fresh air in where you work and when you travel



Letting fresh air in can help to stop the spread of viruses at work and in other places that are not home.

You can find out more from [the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) about ventilation.

You can also read [guidance for workplaces and public buildings](#) on how to ventilate offices other buildings.



You should check that fans and air conditioning units are working well in the workplace.

Never keep fire doors open or other safety doors to keep air coming in.



Remember that air cleaning machines are not the same as letting fresh air in.

You should think about the size of an air cleaning unit and whether it is OK to have this at work. For example, it might make a lot of noise.

Letting fresh air in where you work and when you travel



If you're in a room which doesn't have very much fresh air with other people, you might want to avoid singing or exercising in that room.

Taking breaks away from the room to let fresh air into it can help.



If you are travelling to work on a bus or train, try to open the windows.