

Britons could be told to 'self-quarantine' for two weeks in January as the price of spending time with relatives at Christmas, SAGE papers suggest

By Victoria Allen Science Correspondent For The Daily Mail
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- Advice to quarantine could be issued if gatherings of wider family are allowed
- Contact with multiple people raises risk of getting and spreading virus for weeks
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson has used the festive period as an incentive

Anyone spending time with family members from outside their own household at [Christmas](#) may be required to self-isolate for two weeks afterwards, newly released official documents suggest.

The advice to 'self-quarantine' could be issued if festive gatherings of the wider family are allowed, a paper from the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies ([Sage](#)) warns.

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The experts advising the Government caution that contact with multiple people raises the risk of getting and spreading Covid for up to a fortnight.

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson (pictured on Friday in Leicester) has used the festive period as an incentive for people to follow the rules during England's four-week lockdown

The paper says: 'After a period of high exposure to multiple contacts or different networks (eg a social gathering), the risk of spreading infection to other people can be reduced by avoiding contact as far as possible for two weeks (for example, by physical distancing within the home and self-quarantining to the extent that is feasible).'

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has used the festive period as an incentive for people to follow the rules during

At the Government press conference this week, he said: 'If we follow this package of measures in the way that we can and we have done before, I have no doubt people will be able to have as normal a Christmas as possible, and that we will be able to get things open before Christmas as well.'

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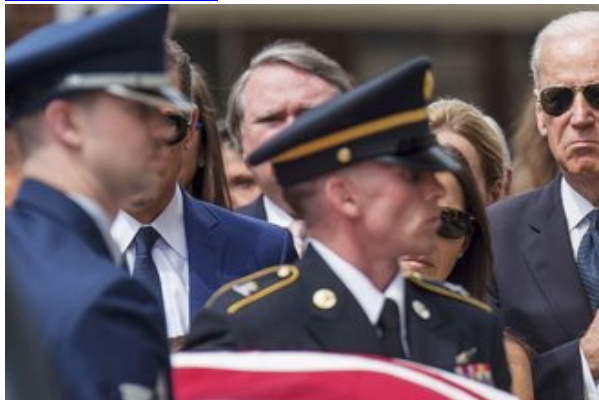


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But various experts have warned that if people can get together, more infections and deaths will follow.

The latest Sage advice to be released says any situation involving large numbers of contacts with different people increases the risk of Covid infection and transmission.

But the scientists warn that the risk is higher when people of different ages meet.

The document states: 'The risk of infection and transmission is raised for up to two weeks after contact with multiple people, places or social networks.'

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Other advice released yesterday by the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behaviours (SPI-B) suggests young people could be given free mobile phone data and streaming services if they are asked to self-isolate.

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Anyone spending time with family members from outside their own household at Christmas may be required to self-isolate for two weeks afterwards, newly released official documents suggest. Pictured: A family have a Christmas dinner (stock image)

In another paper, positive strategies for helping people stick to the public health rules are discussed.

These include possible recommendations for people to greet each other by putting their hand over their heart instead of hugging, and holding 'doorstep celebrations'.

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Ministers are believed to be considering cutting the current 14-day self-isolation period and a paper from last month on virus transmission suggests people are most infectious during their first week of symptoms, especially up to day five.

Frisbee throwing competitions, drive in movies and dog shows: SAGE files reveal the 'safe' activities that can keep morale up in a pandemic

By Vanessa Chalmers for the MailOnline

Frisbee throwing competitions and dog shows could help keep the nation's morale up during the [coronavirus](#)

In advice given to ministers, top scientists also recommended drive-in movies and showing sports on big screens because people can stay socially distanced.

It comes as England was this week thrust into a second [lockdown](#), forcing millions of people to stay at home once again in order to control Covid-19.

But top experts have criticised the blanket policy, insisting the three-tier system was working and blanket national action wasn't needed.

The newly-released advice was fed into Number 10's advisory panel [SAGE](#) in recent weeks.

Scientists also suggested giving infected teenagers free mobile data and access to streaming sites, in order to get them to comply to self-isolation rules.



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Young people should be given free mobile data and streaming to help them adhere to the Covid-19 restrictions on socialising, the SPI-B said

Young people should be given free mobile data and streaming to help them refrain from socialising

Young people should be given free mobile data to help them adhere to the Covid-19 restrictions on socialising, experts said.

The suggestion from SPI-B, a group of top behavioural scientists that feed into SAGE, comes amid concerns about low adherence to self-isolation among Britons, with students and twenty-somethings blamed for triggering the second wave.

In a paper discussing the challenges faced by youngsters during the coronavirus pandemic, scientists said they are 'strongly oriented' towards belonging in a group of friends.

Therefore, to encourage them to stick to rules which slash their ability to socialise, young people should be given free access to platforms which help them remain in contact with their friends, the team said.

This may include free mobile data, so they can chat with friends online, or streaming or gaming services, to keep them entertained in the short-term.

Stay at home orders and self isolation can be hard for young people for a number of reasons, with the team saying it can be hard on their mental health.

Research by the Office for National Statistics has shown those aged 16-39 years are more likely than older people to have experienced depression during the pandemic, while another study found higher levels of loneliness, financial stress and sadness.

The paper was considered at the 63rd SAGE meeting on 22 October 2020.

The risk of passing the coronavirus to a household member is as little as 4% - but is ten times higher between spouses

The risk of passing the coronavirus on to other household members is as little as four per cent, scientists told No10's advisory panel.

But this increases to 43.4 per cent between spouses, who sleep in the same bed and have intimate contact with each other.

EMG and NERVTAG - two sub-groups of SAGE - prepared a paper discussing the main ways SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted between people.

Generally, the highest risk of transmission is indoors, where there is poor ventilation, no face-mask wearing, lots of people and aerosol emission, from singing or aerobic activity, for example.



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The experts said: 'Living with the case, especially sleeping in the same room, attending family/friend gatherings, and dining were found to have a higher risk for transmission than brief (less than 10 minute) community encounters.'

'In household studies secondary attack rates range from four to 35 per cent. Having a daily close contact, sleeping in the same room, or dining in close proximity, all increase the risk of infection.'

The paper suggests that, if a person with the coronavirus is isolated to one room in a house, the risk of them spreading it on to other members of the house is massively reduced.

The scientists noticed this scenario was true for an outbreak on the USS Theodora Roosevelt navy ship, where those sharing the same sleeping space as infected people had higher risk of becoming ill themselves.

The paper was considered at SAGE 63 on 22 October 2020.

Scientists compare the difficulty of abiding by Covid-19 rules to DIETING, saying lapses are inevitable

For many Britons, it is just as hard to abide by Covid-19 rules as it is to stick to a diet, one group of scientists told SAGE.

The SPI-B said it would be important to acknowledge 'lapses' would occur, whereby people accidentally break the rules – as is often the case when trying to stick to a tough weight-loss regime.

But it's important not to give up entirely because 'occasional or minor' mistakes do not undermine efforts overall, the experts said.

The team acknowledged, in reality, there are opportunities for slipping up when it comes to Covid-19 rules because people want to see their friends and family, and hug them.

It's not too dissimilar to when a person on a diet goes to a party, and finds it almost impossible to stay away from the buffet.

