

Tackling Compulsive News-Checking

One of the best things you can do for yourself is to manage the amount of news you read on a regular basis.

Most of us already had a problem with news consumption even before the COVID-19 pandemic. We're plagued by 24-hour news channels, constantly updating live feeds, and notifications from the news apps we've installed.

There are lots of reasons why this pattern of news consumption isn't helpful:

- **Keeping up to date with the news can become an obsession** – and this can drain a huge amount of your time, or leave you feeling anxious when you can't access the news.
- **Many news sources tend to speculate** – and create anxiety around possibilities that never happen.
- **Minor details are often made out to be more important than they really are** – this is a problem across all live news feeds, reporting on details that seem important and worrisome at the time, but later turn out not to be an issue.
- **Day-to-day news is full of sensational personal stories** – these tend to have nothing to do with your situation but are easy to get emotionally involved in and leave you feeling anxious or angry afterwards.

It is true that staying informed is one way many of us attempt to maintain a degree of control. **However, it is possible to stay informed about what matters without following the news all day, or even every day.** To take an example, for the first six or so weeks of lockdown, the official advice stayed the same, and it was possible to go through that period without reading the news at all.

Here are some tips on managing your consumption of news:

- **Stick to accurate information.** If you just want to stick to the information you need to take action on, use the [government's coronavirus information page](#) and the [NHS's coronavirus guide](#). Both of these are kept up to date with the latest guidance.
- **Turn off automatic notifications on your phone.** Even better, delete any news apps you have so that it's harder to quickly check the news.
- **Avoid 24/7 news channels and feeds.** As already explained, these tend to report on every detail and it can be difficult to sift out what is important information and what isn't. Furthermore, they're constantly updating and difficult to tear yourself away from.

- **Consider limiting how you use social media.** You might decide to view certain groups or pages but not scroll through timelines or newsfeeds. Though social media can help you stay in touch with people, it can also make you feel anxious particularly if people are sharing news stories or posting about their fears and concerns.
- **Consider limiting yourself to checking the news just once a day, or once every few days.** It can be easier to limit your news consumption if you make it part of your daily routine.

Finally, you might also want to consider limiting your children's exposure to news coverage of the pandemic, including social media. Children can easily misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

What should I check instead?

The best place to check for the latest guidance is the government's website. Here are some links to the key resources:

- Coronavirus (Covid-19): <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Meeting with others safely (Social Distancing): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>
- Local restriction Tiers: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>
- Coronavirus (Covid-19) Staying Safe Online: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>
- Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- Guidance for households with grandparents and children living together where someone is at increased risk or has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/guidance-for-households-with-grandparents-parents-and-children-living-together-where-someone-is-at-increased-risk-or-has-symptoms-of-coronavirus-cov>
- Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>



Guideposts

Here for You

- COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people most likely to become unwell if they catch coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-on-protecting-people-most-likely-to-get-unwell-from-coronavirus-shielding-young-peoples-version>

<https://guideposts.org.uk/wellbeing/covid-19/tackling-compulsive-news-checking/>

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