

Information Sheet

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As we are all too aware Coronavirus is Headline news at present and everyone is understandably concerned and looking for information and guidance. This does however need to be factual and not published to incite fear and panic into us all.

The symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

A Cough

A high temperature

Shortness of breath

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

It's very unlikely to be coronavirus if you have not been in close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus. Have not been to mainland China, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days. If you have not been to Iran, northern Italy, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar since 19 February 2020.

Does the new coronavirus only affect older people, or can younger people also get it?

People of all ages can get coronavirus. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) are more likely to become severely ill with the virus.

People of all ages should follow simple measures to stop viruses like coronavirus spreading, for example by washing their hands often with soap and water.

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. Respiratory secretions containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission; these are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, in the same way colds spread.

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs;
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face). The virus doesn't survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours.

Can I get coronavirus from mail and parcels?

There is currently no evidence that you can catch coronavirus from parcels and letters. Viruses like coronavirus cannot live for very long outside the body.

Can I get coronavirus from food or takeaways?

There is currently no evidence that you can catch coronavirus from food. Viruses like coronavirus cannot live for very long outside the body. But it's always a good idea to wash your hands in soap and water or use hand sanitiser gel before you prepare or eat food in line with good infection control practice.

Do I need to avoid public transport, mass gatherings, festivals, concerts or places with crowds?

You should continue to go to work as normal. Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. People who feel unwell should ring 111 and ask for advice they should refrain from work if specifically informed not to.

What Can I do to minimise the risks?

In line with good infection control staff, volunteers, residents and visitors should wash their hands:

- on arrival at building
- after using the toilet
- after breaks
- before food preparation
- before eating any food, including snacks
- after emptying waste bins
- before leaving building
- on arrival at home

In addition employees should also follow good infection control measures by:

- using correct PPE where appropriate and designated for their role
- Follow all infection control procedures as directed
- Before and after assisting with any personal care prior and after PPE has put on/removed
- After removing and disposing of items in clinical waste bins

During normal day-to-day activities facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19 and do not need to be worn by staff. Facemasks are only recommended to be worn by infected individuals when advised by a healthcare professional to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people. It remains very unlikely that people receiving care in a care home or the community will become infected. No restrictions or special control measures are required in these settings while a member of staff or resident is waiting for laboratory test results for COVID19. In particular, there is no need to close or send staff home.

