

Advice for on Coronavirus COVID-19

With the number of cases of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) continuing to increase in Ireland, concern about the virus has also increased.

More than 80% of those infected develop mild symptoms such as fever and a cough.

Vulnerable groups such as those over 65 and people with an underlying health condition are most at risk of the disease.

The HSE website has information about the virus, how to prevent contracting it and steps to take if in close contact with someone diagnosed with the virus or indeed if you contract the disease and people are advised to stay up to date with developments of the spread of the disease.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> gives details about the virus and <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/> while updates can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/7e0924-latest-updates-on-covid-19-coronavirus/>

There are practical steps to take to help prevent the spread of the virus. These include:

- Wash hands properly and regularly with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing or using a tissue and put used tissues into bin.
- Use an alcohol rub when in public.
- Cough or sneeze into a bent elbow if you have no tissue.
- DO NOT touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean and try to avoid touching face.
- If attending gatherings leave a 1metre distance from you and the person beside you

The HSE has a step by step guide on washing your hands thoroughly.

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html> .

If you are ill and think you have Covid – 19

- DO NOT go to a doctor or to a hospital because you might infect others.
- Isolate yourself and phone your GP or 112 or 999, if you have severe symptoms or cannot reach your GP or emergency department.
- The HSE Helpline is 1850 24 1850 and is open Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm and Sat and Sun from 10am to 5pm. HSE live chat is also available to answer queries for those with access to the internet.
- Isolate yourself and if living with others, remain in one room as much as possible and have access to a phone.
- Especially stay clear of people who are elderly or have an existing health problem.
- If you do need to go out, wear a face mask, cover your mouth. Cough or sneeze into a bent elbow and not your hands.

Mass Gatherings

As of yet, health officials and the Government have not restricted mass gatherings. However, this may be revised in the coming days or weeks.

Some precautions to be taken if attending public events and mass gatherings

- Follow the personal hygiene steps as outlined above.
- If you are unwell do not attend a mass gathering.
- If you are in the high risk group – over 65 or have an underlying health condition, consider if attending the event is in your best interest. Discuss any concerns with your Doctor.
- Read any information available on the event's website, social media etc. prior to attending the event.
- Keep your distance from people who are sick.
- Follow the instructions of organisers and health personnel at the event.

Advice for Community Groups working with Vulnerable groups

As of yet, there are no specific guidelines for community groups who provide services to elderly and vulnerable people in their community.

For now, continue to follow usual Health and Safety procedures and disinfect all surfaces.

There are no HSE leaflets on COVID-19 published as yet, so for those who use your service, who may not have access to the internet or are unable to use a computer, consider printing off some information for them.

If a client is infected, see can the service be provided over the phone and check in with them by phone. In the case of Meals on Wheels, check if it would be possible to arrange to have meals delivered and dropped to door with the person being able to take in the meal once the delivery person is away from the door.

If an employee contracts the virus, ensure they stay at home and contact a GP or emergency department and get other staff members tested.

If have contact details of client's next of Kin, see if alternative arrangements can be made to deliver the service to the client.

In the case of active retirement groups, older people and other high risk groups attending classes and other events, at this time there is no restrictions on continuing to attend these if you are feeling well. These are generally smaller gatherings. We know the importance of the social aspect of these gatherings for a lot of people.

Again, if attending these gatherings, take extra care in washing hands, and keeping distance from people. If you are feeling unwell, consider not attending until you feel better.

Posters are available to download and print off on

[file:///C:/Users/Louise/Downloads/70619_8d3c80a87fdc472d9ddb3edade2920b7%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Louise/Downloads/70619_8d3c80a87fdc472d9ddb3edade2920b7%20(1).pdf)

and Hand Hygiene poster <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/hand-hygiene-poster.pdf> that can be displayed in your centres.

Keep informed and updated on Covid-19 from the HSE special Coronavirus page

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> and

<https://www.gov.ie/en/news/7e0924-latest-updates-on-covid-19-coronavirus/>