

Search

COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Do you or someone you live with have a high temperature and/or new continuous cough?

Yes

No

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#)

COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Thursday, 26 March 2020
- Health Protection



[Table of Contents](#)

Everyone in Northern Ireland should now be social distancing

[Back to top](#)

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of virus called coronavirus.

Everyone should do what they can to stop coronavirus spreading.

Social distancing will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus by reducing the social interaction between people.

You should:

- avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus - these symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough;
- avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
- work from home, where possible - your employer should support you to do this.

- avoid large gatherings and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
- avoid gatherings with friends and family – keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

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Everyone should be trying to follow these measures at

[I've read it](#) [More information](#)

We strongly advise you to follow the above measures and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible, particularly if you:

- are over 70;
- have an underlying health condition;
- are pregnant.

This advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.

For more information see [COVID-19: guidance on social distancing and for vulnerable people](#)

Preventing the spread of infection

[Back to top](#)

Like seasonal flu, the same public health advice applies for COVID-19 (Coronavirus): if you cough or sneeze, use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose, throw it away carefully after use, and wash your hands.



The best way to prevent the spread of infections, including coronavirus, is good personal hygiene. This means washing your hands regularly using soap and water and drying them with paper towels.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus. Antibiotics do not work against viruses, they only work on bacterial infections. Antibiotics should not be used to try to prevent or treat COVID-19 (coronavirus). They will not work and may cause harm.

A British Sign Language version of this information is available [here](#).

An Irish Sign Language Version of this information is available [here](#).

What should I do if I think I have coronavirus?

[Back to top](#)

If you have either:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).

Everyone in your house must stay at home.

Do not go to your GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus, you'll need to stay at home for 7 days;
- if you live with someone who has symptoms, you'll need to stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms;
- however, if you develop symptoms during this 14-day period, you'll need to stay at home for 7 days from the day your symptoms started (regardless of what day you are on in the original 14-day period). This may mean you have to stay at home for a maximum of 21 days;

- if you have symptoms and live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else they can stay with for the 14-day isolation period;
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community;
- testing for coronavirus is not needed if you are well enough to stay at home.

If you have to stay at home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible. Guidance on this can be found on the Public Health England website:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

You can ring NHS 111 for information or advice and they will help you decide if you need to contact your GP.

Calling your GP is only necessary if you have:

- an existing health condition;
- problems with your immune system;
- very serious symptoms.

Do **not** attend your GP surgery or emergency department in person before calling ahead and speaking with someone.

If it is a medical emergency and you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the operator of your symptoms.

For more information see [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#)

Advice on testing

[Back to top](#)

Testing is currently limited to patients who are being admitted to hospital and some health care workers.

We would advise caution about obtaining testing from non-governmental sources. A positive or negative test will not be recognised by the NHS and will not change the advice given. You will still have to observe recommended isolation periods.

Please be aware that the NHS is not offering testing to people in the community. If a person calls at your front door offering to test you, do not allow them to enter your home. Close and lock the door. Inform the police.

If you work in healthcare: You should contact your Trust line manager and occupational health. Your employer will give specific advice about diagnostic testing and when you can return to work.

Travel advice

[Back to top](#)

The Public Health Agency (PHA) does not issue travel advice. If you're concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on your existing travel plans, check with your airline, tour operator, cruise line or other transport and accommodation providers as applicable. People who plan to travel should check the travel advice [here](#).

Advice for older people and people with an underlying health condition

[Back to top](#)

For the latest advice for older people and people with an underlying health condition click [here](#).

Please read this advice carefully.

Advice for pregnancy

[Back to top](#)

For the latest advice for women who are pregnant click [here](#).

Please read this advice carefully.

Guidance for healthcare professionals

[Back to top](#)

Guidance for domiciliary care providers

For information for Domiciliary Care Providers see [GUIDANCE FOR DOMICILIARY CARE PROVIDERS - COVID19.pdf](#).

Guidance for Nursing and Residential Care Homes

For information for Nursing and Residential Care Homes see [GUIDANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE PROVIDERS - COVID19.pdf](#).

Guidance for General Dental Practitioners

For information for General Dental Practitioners click [here](#).

Guidance for Homeless Providers in Northern Ireland

For information for Homeless Providers in Northern Ireland click [here](#)

Guidance for educational settings and child care

[Back to top](#)

Information for schools and other educational settings in providing advice for pupils, students, staff and parents or carers regarding novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is available from the Department of Education, please visit www.education-ni.gov.uk

Guidance for workers, businesses and other organisations

[Back to top](#)

If you have to stay at home because of coronavirus and you need a note for your employer, visit [NHS 111 online](#).

Guidance for employers and businesses

For guidance for employers and businesses in providing advice about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) click [here](#).

For guidance on further businesses and premises to close click [here](#).

Guidance for shipping and sea ports

For guidance for shipping and seaports on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) see [Guidance for Shipping and seaports on corona virus.pdf](#).

Public information posters and leaflets for download

[Back to top](#)

Advice on COVID-19 (Coronavirus), including posters and social media graphics are available [here](#).

What is the situation in Northern Ireland?

[Back to top](#)

25 March 2020

As of 11:45am on Thursday 26 March, testing has resulted in 32 new positive cases, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in Northern Ireland to 241.

To date, ten people who tested positive have sadly died.

Daily surveillance reports can be found [here](#)

Information sources

As this situation is rapidly changing the most up-to-date guidance can be found on the Public Health England website: www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance

Advice for medical professionals can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus

For information on guidance for healthcare professionals on COVID-19 infection in pregnancy see: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): latest information and advice: www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public

For further information on coronavirus see: www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus

Previous situation updates

[Back to top](#)

[COVID-19 - 23 January 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 31 January 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 6 February 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 9 February 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 10 February 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 19 February 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 20 February 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 25 January 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 28 February 2020 - 1.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 28 February 2020 - 2.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 29 February 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 6 March 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 7 March 2020.pdf](#)

[COVID-19 - 11 March 2020.pdf](#)

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