Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

Hide message

Guidance

Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK

Find out the number of cases and risk level in the UK, what to do if you have symptoms, and what the government is doing about the virus.

Published 24 January 2020
Last updated 15 March 2020 — see all updates
From: **Department of Health and Social Care** and **Public Health England**

Contents

— What to do if you have symptoms
— Number of cases
— Risk level
— Recent government action
— Diagnosis and analysis
— Further information

Go to NHS.UK/coronavirus for information about the virus and how to protect yourself.

Sign up for email alerts to get the latest information.

Video: How to wash your hands properly

What to do if you have symptoms

Stay at home for 7 days if you have either:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

This will help to protect others in your community while you are infectious.

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

You do not need to contact NHS 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

We will not be testing people who are self-isolating with mild symptoms.

> [COVID-19: stay at home guidance](#)

Number of cases

As of 9am on 15 March 2020, 40,279 people have been tested in the UK, of which 38,907 were confirmed negative and 1,372 were confirmed as positive. 35 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 have died.

Cases identified in England

[Confirmed cases in each local authority and NHS region](#) are published by Public Health England (PHE).

Risk level

The risk to the UK has been raised to high.

Recent government action

The government published its [coronavirus action plan](#) on 3 March.

On 10 February, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, announced [strengthened legal powers to protect public health](#).

[The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020](#) have been put in place to reduce the risk of further human-to-human transmission in this country by keeping individuals in isolation where public health professionals believe there is a reasonable risk an individual may have the virus.

Diagnosis and analysis

The UK is one of the first countries outside China to have a prototype specific laboratory test for this new disease. Healthcare professionals who are contacted by a patient with symptoms following travel to an affected area have been advised to submit samples to PHE for testing. Individuals should be treated in isolation.

After the experience of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, PHE developed a series of diagnostic tests to detect any member of the family of coronaviruses. These have been used for several years, and were able to detect the first UK case of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in 2012.

With the first reported publication of the genome sequence of a 2019 novel coronavirus, PHE was able to rapidly develop further specific tests for this virus, working with WHO and global network of laboratories.

When a clinician suspects novel coronavirus (COVID-19), they take samples from the nose, throat and deeper respiratory samples, package and send them safely to PHE Colindale. PHE can provide a laboratory result from this specific virus on the same working day.

PHE also has the capability to sequence the viral genome and compare this to published sequences from China, if a case occurs. This will provide valuable information on any mutations in the virus over time and allow an improved understanding of how it spreads.

Further information

[Coronavirus (COVID-19): UK government response](#)

[Travel advice: coronavirus (COVID-19)](#)

[Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for health professionals and other organisations](#)

Published 24 January 2020
Last updated 15 March 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

Related content

[Coronavirus (COVID-19): UK government response](#)

[COVID-19: infection prevention and control](#)

[Foreign travel checklist](#)

Detailed guidance

[High consequence infectious diseases (HCID)](#)

[Travel advice: coronavirus (COVID-19)](#)

Collection

[COVID-19: guidance for health professionals](#)

Explore the topic

[Infectious diseases](#)

Is this page useful?   [Yes](#)   [No](#)

[Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

Transition period

[Find out what it means for you](#)

Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

Money and tax

Passports, travel and living abroad

Visas and immigration

Working, jobs and pensions

Departments and policy

How government works

Departments

Worldwide

Services

Guidance and regulation

News and communications

Research and statistics

Policy papers and consultations

Transparency and freedom of information releases

Help   Privacy   Cookies   Contact   Accessibility statement   Terms and conditions   Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg

Built by the Government Digital Service