

# Patient information for self-isolation at home

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## Self-isolation Managing coronavirus at home

### You will need to self-isolate:

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus
- before you get tested for coronavirus
- if you are waiting for test results
- if you have had a positive test result for coronavirus
- if you have any cold or flu-like symptoms, especially a new cough, shortness of breath or fever cough or wheezing

Most people with coronavirus will only have mild symptoms and will get well within weeks. Even though the symptoms are mild, you can still spread the virus to others.

### What is self-isolation?

We are asking everyone with symptoms of coronavirus to self-isolate for 10 days from when they first get symptoms, the last 5 days of which must be fever free. Self-isolation means you stay at home and avoid contact with other people, including those in your household. Even if you have mild symptoms, you can still spread coronavirus to others. If you have no symptoms and your test result is positive for COVID-19 you must self-isolate for 10 days from the day of your test.

### What kind of symptoms could I expect to feel with coronavirus?

Not everyone who has coronavirus will have the same symptoms. Four in five people will have mild symptoms. They will recover on their own at home with rest and care.

### Symptoms of coronavirus

Very common symptoms are fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, lost or changed sense of smell or taste, fatigue or muscle pain.

Less common symptoms are sore throat, runny or blocked nose, or headache.

Occasional symptoms are diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting.

Watch out for signs that you are getting worse:

- If you start to feel very unwell, especially if your breathing changes or becomes difficult, telephone your doctor immediately.
- If you are very short of breath and cannot reach someone, call the emergency services on 112 or 999.



Visit [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for updated factual information and advice, or call **1850 24 1850**



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## Keeping well during self-isolation

- Keep yourself mobile by getting up and moving around as much as possible. If you have a garden, backyard or balcony, go out and get some fresh air.
- Keep a distance of 2 metres away from other people. If that is not possible, keep a distance of at least 1 metre from other people and wear a medical face mask.
- Stay in touch with people over the phone. Ask a family member, friend or neighbour to check in with you over the phone a few times every day. Let them know how you are feeling.
- Older people can phone the charity ALONE on 0818 222 024 from Monday to Sunday, 8am to 8pm.
- Self-isolation can be boring or frustrating. It may affect your mood and feelings. You may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping.

## Treat coronavirus symptoms at home

- There is no specific treatment for coronavirus. But many of the symptoms of coronavirus can be treated at home.
  - About 80% of people can recover at home and without needing to go to hospital.
  - If you are generally fit and healthy with only mild symptoms, your GP will tell you to self-isolate.
  - The most important thing you can do is to protect others from catching coronavirus. It is especially important to protect people at higher risk of becoming seriously ill from coronavirus.
- You should:
- > self-isolate
  - > get lots of rest and sleep
  - > drink enough water to avoid dehydration. Your pee should be light yellow or clear
  - > eat healthily
  - > avoid smoking
  - > keep warm
  - > monitor and treat your symptoms.

## How to self-isolate

Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people. Behave as if you have the virus if you have symptoms. If you have been diagnosed with coronavirus or have symptoms, the people you live with will need to restrict their movements.

### Do

- Stay at home, in a room with a window you can open.
- Keep away from others in your home as much as you can. Use a separate toilet if possible.
- Check your symptoms – call a doctor if they get worse. Phone your doctor if you need to – do not visit them.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes using a tissue – clean your hands properly afterwards.
- Wash your hands properly and often.
- Use your own towel – do not share a towel with others.
- Clean your room every day with a household cleaner or disinfectant.

### Don't

- Do not go to work, school, religious services or public areas.
- Do not share your things.
- Do not use public transport or taxis.
- Do not invite visitors to your home.
- Do not go outside unless you have your own outdoor space where you can get some fresh air. Keep away from older people, anyone with long-term medical conditions and pregnant women. It's OK for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or supplies. Make sure you're not in the same room as them when they do.

## If you live with other people and you are self-isolating

As well as the advice above, if you are living with other people, there are extra things you should do to protect others.

- Keep away from other people in your home as much as you can.
- Stay in a separate room with a window you can open.
- If you have to go into a room with other people in it, try to keep a distance of 2 metres. If that is not possible, keep a distance of at least 1 metre from other people and wear a medical face mask.
- If you have to share a bathroom with others, use the bathroom last and then clean it thoroughly.
- Do not share any items you've used with other people.

Things you should not share include:

- > food
- > dishes
- > drinking glasses
- > cups
- > knives, forks and spoons
- > towels
- > bedding

## Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands properly and often with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.

## Meals

- If possible, have someone leave your food on a tray at your bedroom door.
- When you have finished, leave everything on the tray at the door.
- This should be collected and put in a dishwasher and hands washed properly afterwards.
- If you don't have a dishwasher:
  - > wash in hot soapy water, wearing rubber gloves
  - > leave to air dry

> wash the rubber gloves while you are still wearing them

> remove gloves and wash your hands

## Using the bathroom

- If possible use a toilet that no one else is using.
- If that is not possible and you do not have your own toilet or bathroom, clean your hands before entering, after using the toilet and before you leave the room.
- Clean any surfaces you have touched after using the bath or shower. Do not share your towels with anyone else.
- If you are not well enough to do this yourself, someone else in the house can do this for you. The person should use household or rubber gloves if they can. They should wash and dry the gloves after each use. They should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after taking off the gloves.

## Use a detergent or disinfectant to clean your home

- Many cleaning and disinfectant products sold in supermarkets can kill coronavirus on surfaces.
- Use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these are very good at getting rid of the virus. Follow the instructions on the manufacturer's label and check they can be used on the surface you are cleaning.
- Clean all surfaces every day as usual with a detergent, disinfectant or disinfectant wipe.

This includes:

- > counters
- > table-tops
- > doorknobs
- > bathroom fixtures
- > toilets and toilet handles
- > phones
- > keyboards
- > tablets
- > bedside tables

- Clean remote controls, games consoles and similar items thoroughly before anyone else in the house uses them. If you cough or sneeze on them wipe them clean immediately.

- If you have rubber gloves, wear them when cleaning surfaces, clothing or bedding. Wash the gloves while still wearing them, then wash your hands after you take them off.
- Wash reusable cleaning cloths in a hot wash cycle of a washing machine after use. Put disposable gloves and cleaning cloths in a plastic waste bag after using them.

## Laundry

- Put your dirty laundry in a plastic bag. Have someone collect it from your bedroom door. If possible, they should wear rubber gloves.

They should:

- > hold the laundry away from themselves
- > wash the laundry at the highest temperature for the material, with a laundry detergent
- > clean all surfaces and the area around the washing machine
- > wash the rubber gloves while still wearing them
- > wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after removing the gloves or handling dirty laundry
- If possible tumble dry and iron using a hot setting or steam iron.
- *Do not take laundry to a laundrette.*

## Managing rubbish

- Put all personal waste, including used tissues, masks and all cleaning waste in a plastic rubbish bag. Tie the bag when it is almost full. Place the plastic bag in a second bin bag and tie the bag.
- Leave the bag somewhere safe. The bags should be left for 3 days before collection.
- Dispose of other waste the way you usually would.

## If you have face masks

- If you have to be in a room with someone who has coronavirus, you should wear a face covering or face mask.
- The person with coronavirus should wear a face mask.
- The person with coronavirus should put on and off their mask in the room, in which they are self-isolating.

## Caring for someone in self-isolation

- You may be caring for a child, family member or someone who needs support while they are in self-isolation. If you are, follow the advice above.
  - You should also:
    - > stay away from them as much as possible (at least 2 metres) and avoid touching them – use your phone to communicate
    - > wash your hands properly every time you have contact with the person
    - > if you have face masks, both of you should wear one when you have to be in the same room – children under the age of 13 should not wear a mask
    - > if you have to clean phlegm or spit from their face use a clean tissue, put it into a waste bag and wash your hands
    - > put them in a well-ventilated room alone
    - > limit their movement in the house
    - > get them to use a different toilet if possible
    - > limit the number of caregivers
    - > keep them away from older people, people with long-term conditions or pregnant women
- If possible, only one person should look after the person self-isolating. Ideally, this would be someone who is in good health.

## How long do I have to self-isolate for?

Only stop self-isolation when both of these apply to you:

- you have had no fever for 5 days
- it has been 10 days since you first developed symptoms.

## If you had the test and coronavirus was not detected:

It is possible that you have another infectious illness, such as flu. To reduce the risk of spreading that infection, continue to self-isolate, wash your hands regularly and sneeze and cough into a tissue until 48 hours have passed since you had symptoms. After 48 hours without symptoms, you can stop self-isolating.

## What should my household members do?

- They should follow the advice provided in the leaflet '*Advice for people who share the same home with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus.*' People in the household need to restrict their movements for 14 days after you started to self-isolate. This means they should stay at home and avoid other people as much as possible.
- If your test shows you don't have coronavirus, they can return to normal activities straight way, following the current Government advice.

## Can my pets get coronavirus?

There is little evidence that pets such as cats and dogs can spread coronavirus to humans. It is best to protect yourself by properly cleaning your hands often when in contact with pets.

## Restricted movements for close contacts

You need to restrict your movements further if you:

- > live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus, but you feel well
- > are a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus.

### Close contact

This is only a guide but close contact can mean:

- spending more than 15 minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person in any setting
- living in the same house or shared accommodation as an infected person.

If you are a close contact, you should restrict your movements. This means avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.

This will last until 14 days after the last time you came into contact with the person who has been diagnosed with coronavirus.

## Contact tracing

You may be contacted by our contact tracing team if you have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus.

## How to restrict your movements

- You can still go outside to exercise by yourself as long as you keep 2 metres distance from other people.
- Keep away from older people, anyone with long-term medical conditions and pregnant women.
- Do not go to work or school.
- Do not use public transport.
- Do not visit others.
- Do not go to the shop unless absolutely necessary.

## Will my employer be told my result?

We will always try and tell you your test result first. Sometimes we have to share your result with your manager or a health professional at your place of work. We only do this if we have to. This is to ensure the safety of you, your work colleagues and any vulnerable people at your place of work. We only share the smallest amount of information as possible. This is in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Infectious Diseases legislation 1981. Go to [hse.ie/moh](https://hse.ie/moh) for more information.

# How to Handwash?



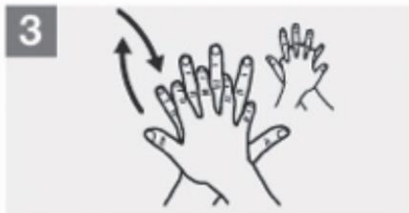
0 Wet hands with water;



1 Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



2 Rub hands palm to palm;



3 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



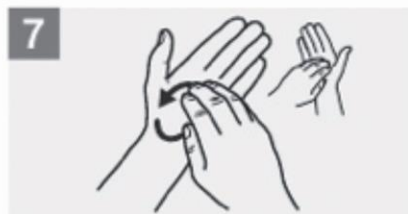
4 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



7 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



8 Rinse hands with water;



9 Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



10 Use towel to turn off faucet;



11 Your hands are now safe.



World Health Organization

Patient Safety

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

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Clean Your Hands

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