CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FACTSHEET

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WHAT IS IT?

Coronavirus disease 2019 also referred to as **COVID-19** is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

The coronavirus is most likely spread from person-to-person through:

- Close contact with a person who has the infection.
- Contact with a person with the confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes.
- Touching objects or surfaces (e.g. door handles or tables) that have been contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with the confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

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HOW CAN WE STOP IT SPREADING?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against COVID-19. Its important to:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, before and after eating and after going to the toilet.
- Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow, and use hand-sanitiser. **Always wash your hands after sneezing or coughing.**
- Wear a mask when in public. It is mandatory to do so.
- If feeling unwell, avoid contact with others (e.g. touching, hugging etc.)

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTONS?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Fever, tiredness, and dry cough.

- Some people infected may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea.

- It is possible to become infected but not develop any symptoms or feel unwell. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to appear. **The virus will still be contagious even if you're symptom free.**

WHAT TO DO IF A MEMBER OF STAFF OR CLIENT BECOMES ILL?

In the following cases workers must enter self-isolation and inform their manager that they cannot go to work if they have:

- Travelled through a country not on the green list in the last 14 days or had contact with someone who has. (they must also isolate themselves for 14 days).
- Have any Covid-19 symptoms.
- Been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus in the last 14 days (they also must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BECOME ILL?

- If you've recently returned from a country not on the green list or have had any contact with someone who has, **you must self-isolate for 14 days.** If you are still symptom free after those 14 days you may ask your manager to return to work.

- Self-isolate at home and avoid going into public at all costs.

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WHAT IS SELF-ISOLATION?

If a worker/yourself is required to self-isolate themselves, then they should be advised to remain at home for 14 days following their last exposure to the infection and avoid close contact with other people completely. They should:

- Avoid having visitors and ask friends and family to drop off any food or medicines that they may require.
- Avoid leaving the house at all costs and do not go to work, school, public areas or use public transport.
- Don't go to the GP or A&E.

HANDWASHING TECHNIQUES TO STAY HEALTHY

Follow these five steps every time.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (temperature does not matter), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel.

Is there a vaccine to prevent or cure Coronavrius?

Yes. Covid-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes Covid-19 without us having to get the illness. Currently the following vaccinations are being used in Ireland: Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Janssen/ Johnson & Johnson.

Do I need to wear a face mask?

It is now mandatory regulation to wear a face mask while in public. There are no exceptions. Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to €1000- or 1-month imprisonment. Current guidelines are to be reviewed in October 2021.

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Travel & Coronavirus

If you are travelling to Ireland from overseas you must <u>fill out a Passenger Locator Form before departure</u>.

You also have to have appropriate valid proof of vaccination or recovery, or to present evidence of a negative RT-PCR result from a test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival into the country.

A relevant EU Digital COVID Certificate based on vaccination, recovery or a negative RT-PCR test constitutes valid proof. Non RT-PCR tests are not accepted when travelling to Ireland and passengers with a Digital COVID Certificate based on a non RT-PCR test (for example, antigen) require proof of an additional negative RT-PCR test taken no more than 72 hours before arrival
<u>https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/general-covid-19-travel-advisory/</u>

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COVID-19 KEY FACTS

- It is most likely to be spread through coughs and sneezes when a person is infectious. **Sneeze into your elbow** and always wash your hands after sneezing/coughing.
- There is a possiblility that the virus can spread from surface to human contact.
- You must **not go** to A&E if you are unwell and think you may have COVID-19.
- You must call your GP or ring **112** or **999** if you think you have coronavrius.
- Good hand hygiene is one of the best ways of preventing the spread of the virus. Cough etiquette helps too.

All information found in this article has been gathered from the World Health Organisation, Health Service Executive, National Health Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

All information is accurate as of the August 2021 and may be subject to change.

To keep informed of any changes in these guidelines please go to www.hse.ie   or   www.who.int

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