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.**
- Use hand sanitisers regularly when in public.
- 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 an infected country (listed below) in the last 14 days or had contact with someone who has. (they must also isolate themselves for 14 days).
- There is currently 8 heavily infected countries which are; China, Italy, Hong Kong, Iran, Singapore, Korea, Japan or the city Paris. **You must self-isolate for 14 days if you have returned from or been in contact with someone from these countries recently.**
- 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 an infected country 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.
- Avoid going into public, if it necessary you have to go into public wear a face mask which can be found at all local pharmacies or contact Myhomecare if you need one.

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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 not go to work, school, public areas or use public transport
- Don't go to the GP or A&E
- If going into public, wear a facemask which can be found at all local pharmacies.

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?

Just like the normal flu, there is currently no vaccine to treat or protect against coronavirus.

Do I need to wear a face mask?

It is not necessary to wear a face mask if you are well. If you have flu like symptoms and are going into the public, wear a face mask. Face masks can be found at all local pharamcies or Myhomecare will provide you with one if required.

There is someone in my child's school/university who has just returned from an infected area. What should I do?

- Any person who has returned from an infected area (China, Italy, Hong Kong, Iran, Singapore, Korea, Japan or Paris) in the last 14 days should avoid attending school, work or university.
- People from these specified areas are advised to self-isolate for 14 days.
- All other students should continue to attend school or university

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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.

- Around 80% of people will recover from the disease without needing special treatment.

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 11 March 2020 and may be subject to change.

To keep informed of any changes in these guidelines please go to
www2.hse.ie   or   www.who.int

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