

# **COVID-19 Guidance for Primary care Healthcare Staff providing home care visits and outpatient visits**

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## **Guidelines are Guidelines**

The purpose of guidelines is to support care that meets the needs of the person, they are not a set of rigid rules and they should always be applied with care and compassion – would this seem fair if I was on the other end of this is a very useful question

# CAUTION!



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

## DO NOT DROP YOUR GUARD



The vaccine is safe

The vaccine is effective **AFTER** the immune response

The vaccine is not perfect

There are lot of other infections besides COVID-19

**IPC does not go away because you have been vaccinated**

# What we will discuss today

- **Review of current COVID-19 status**
- **Implications of COVID-19 vaccination**
- **IPC practice revisited during home and OPD visits**
- **Testing and monitoring**
- **Scenarios and Chat box discussion**

**Vaccination continues to be being rolled out and together with continued public health measures this approach appears to be our ray of sunshine on the horizon despite ongoing challenges**



# Updates to recent guidance and some points of interest



Recent WHO update on transmission

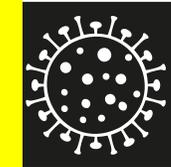
Revision on vaccine protection

Removal of requirement for testing before admission / respite to LTRCF in people with full vaccine protection

Updated to reflect NPHET recommendation on close contact testing at day 0 and day 10 with exit from restricted movements if Day 10 test is reported as 'not detected'

Specific reference to ventilation in the persons home in so far as practical

# Transmission of COVID-19



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Route of transmission of the new variants considered as predominantly **droplet (short range) and contact** transmitted from someone who is infected

Risk of airborne (longer range) spread has always been recognised but is a bigger concern now

Existing Public Health and IPC measures remain highly effective in protecting against the new variants of the virus

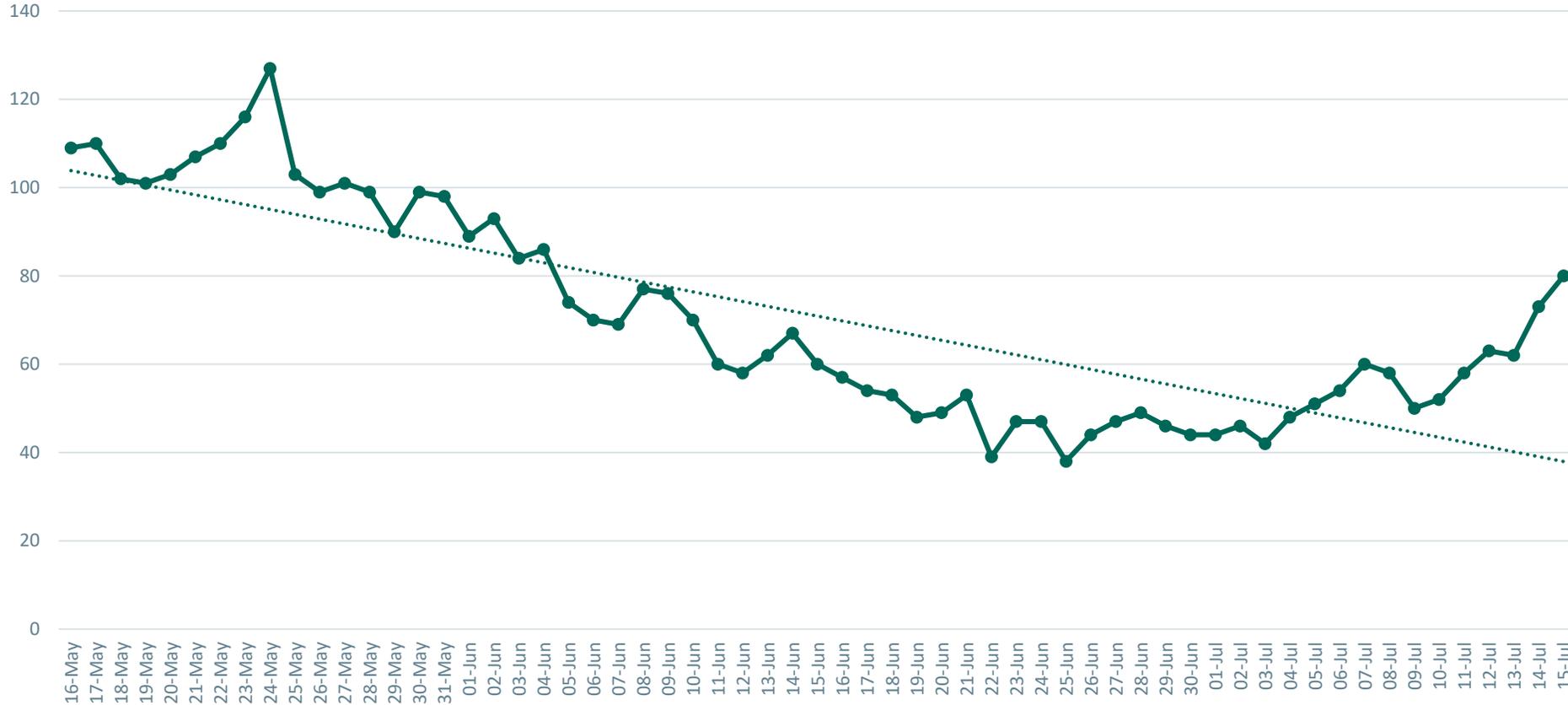
Note increased emphasis on ventilation as we have learned more about new variants



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## Covid 19 Hospitalised Cases 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Covid 19 Hospitalised Cases across 29 Acute Hospitals incl CHI



80

Hospitalised cases today

↑38%

increase (+22) in hospitalised cases on same day last week

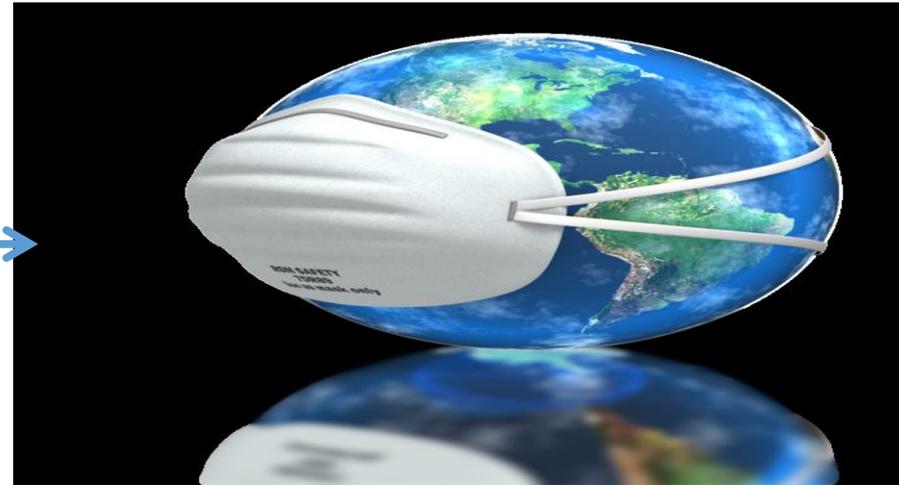
↑111%

increase (+42) in hospitalised cases compared to lowest number (n=38) on 25<sup>th</sup> June

# New variants and travel



Risk of introduction of more new variants from other countries continues to drive restrictions on international travel right across the world



# COVID-19 Vaccine

**Vaccination is appearing to be the game changer**

Individuals are considered to have vaccine protection as follows:

- 15 days after the second AstraZeneca dose
- 7 days after the second Pfizer-BioNTech dose
- 14 days after the second Moderna dose
- 14 days after Johnson & Johnson one dose



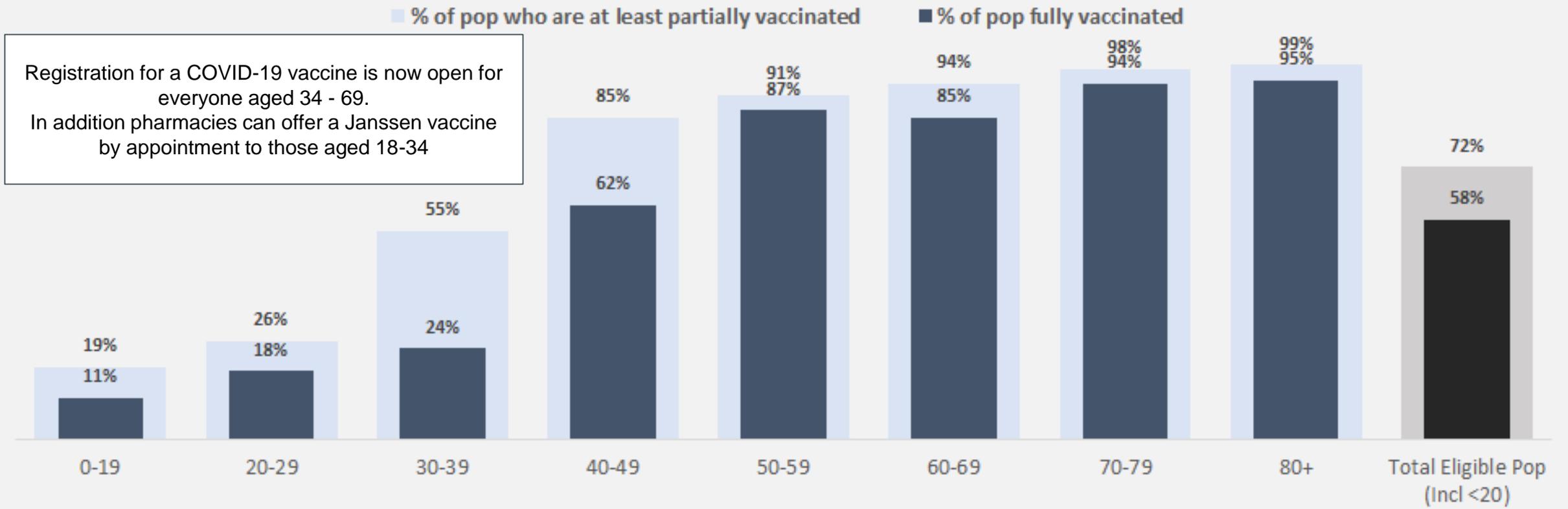
**Maximum **and lasting** vaccine protection depends on being fully vaccinated after completing the vaccination schedule**

# 4. Ireland: % of age groups that have been vaccinated

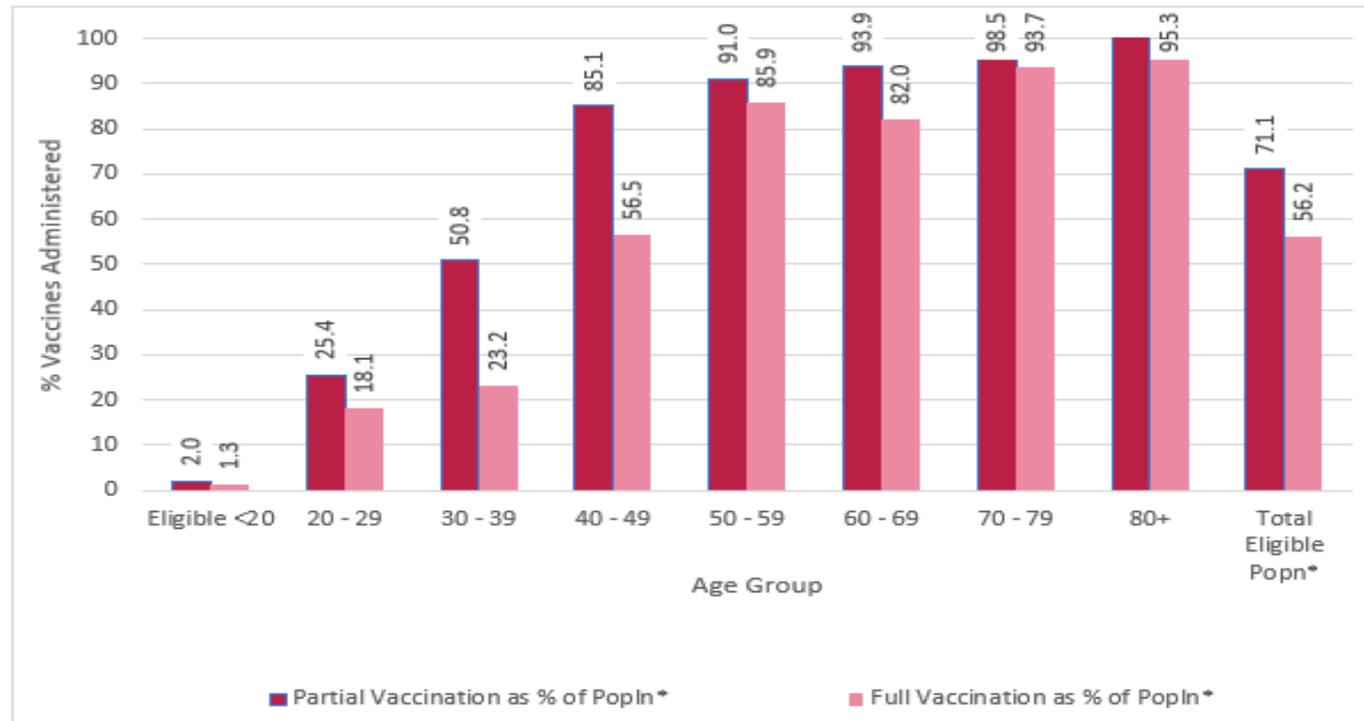
72% of total eligible population are at least partially vaccinated and 58% are fully vaccinated

Note: Numbers for GP vaccinations incomplete at present due to cyber attack

Chart showing the % population vaccinated by age group & at total eligible population.



# 7. Percentage of Uptake of Total Population by of partially\*\* and fully vaccinated\*\*\* Unknown age not shown (as at 11th July 2021)



\* Based on CSO 2021 estimates, total eligible popln estimate n=3,778,000, April/May 2021 estimate includes those under 20 years with a medical condition plus all those over 20 years of age

\*\*Partially vaccinated - people who have received any vaccination either a 1st dose of a two-dose vaccine type or a single dose (Janssen) vaccine

\*\*\*Fully vaccinated - people who are fully vaccinated (received dose 1 & 2 of a two-dose plan or a single Janssen dose vaccine)

**Note:** The numbers reported are understated as (a) there is a delay in getting all GP vaccinations onto the system and (b) figures exclude any one dose Janssen vaccinations administered by Pharmacists

# Summary of Delta variant



The Delta variant is spreading worldwide



**40-60%** more transmissible than the Alpha variant



Prediction that **90%** of cases will be Delta in EU/EEA by August



Higher risk of hospitalisation and deaths in unvaccinated and partially vaccinated



Countries are now reintroducing or have already reintroduced public health measures



Those who are fully vaccinated are protected

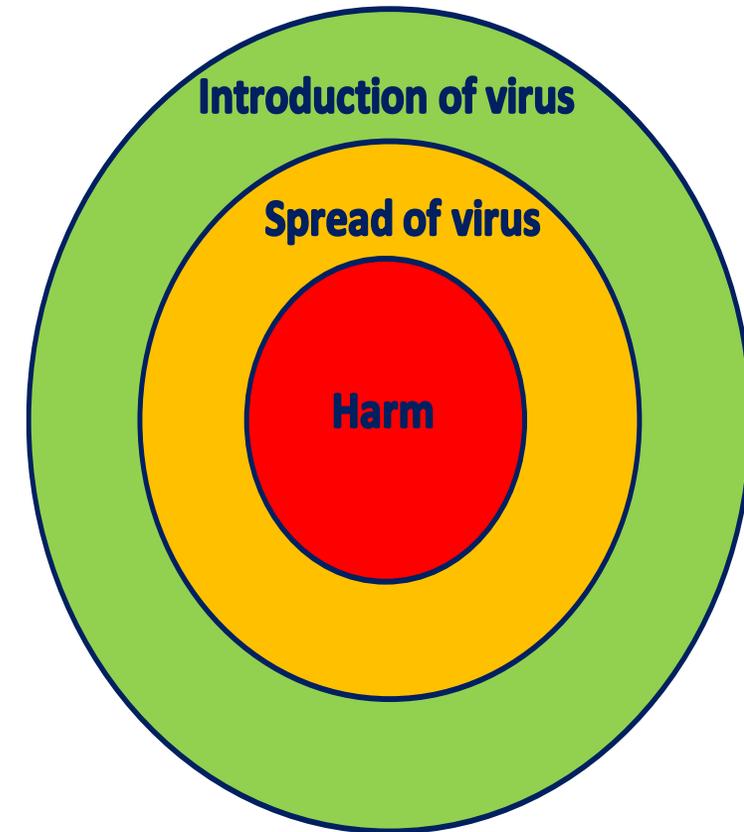
# Managing the risk of COVID-19 - three elements



take all practical measures to reduce unintended introduction of the virus into the OPD or persons home (**vaccine**)

take all practical measures to reduce the risk of the virus spreading if introduced (**vaccine**)

having processes in place to minimise the risk of if both other elements fail and the virus is introduced and spreads (**vaccine**)





# Safety Pause: helping teams provide safe quality care

## How safe is the service today- keep connected!



- Is everyone feeling OK today?
- Has everyone received COVID awareness and IPC training?
- Any new staff -what support do they need in the service?
- Have we any risks or concerns in our service today and do our staff know who to speak to?
- What is working well for us ?
- What is not working so well us?
- Is there one thing we can improve for people in our service today ?

# Key reminders for staff to prevent transmission



- **Preventing it Get Started - Staff**
- Do not come to work if you have symptoms of respiratory tract infection
- Do not come to work even if you are told you don't need a test (until 48hrs after symptoms resolve)
- Do not come to work even if you have a not-detected test (until 48hrs after symptoms resolve)
- **Declaration of fitness for work possible?** (protecting patients and colleagues)
  
- **Go home if you become symptomatic**
- Remind colleagues to go home if they are symptomatic
- **The role and methods for staff testing**
- Method of sample collection (nasopharyngeal swab or deep nasal swab)
- Method of laboratory testing (PCR or antigen)

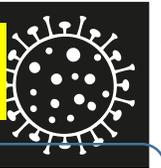
# Preparedness advice for managers – we may feel safe today but are we fully prepared to avoid transmission



- Ensure all staff have undertaken awareness training around COVID-19
- Ensure all staff are trained with standard and transmission based precautions
- Ensure that everything practical is done to support and encourage staff to get vaccinated
  - Hand hygiene & respiratory etiquette
  - Appropriate choice and use of PPE
  - Procedures for safely donning and doffing of PPE and disposal of PPE
  - Decontamination of the environment and equipment
  - Public health measures around wearing masks and physical distancing
  - Practical measure to ensure adequate ventilation
- Ensure supplies are available to staff including:
  - alcohol based hand rub (ABHR)
  - personal protective equipment
  - cleaning materials

# **IPC practice revisited during home and outpatient clinic visits**

# Standard Precautions essential at all times with current public health measures



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**Cleaning your hands:** using an alcohol hand rub or by hand washing using “5 moments in hand hygiene”

**Wearing PPE** to protect yourself when there is a possibility of coming in contact with blood and body fluids.

**Gloves and apron are a common example**

Empty a catheter/ commode or assisting with incontinence

Performing a wound dressing Taking a nasal swab or obtaining a blood sample



**Wear eye protection and face mask/visor** when there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, nose and mouth

**Clean healthcare equipment** after use with detergent and water / detergent wipes or follow manufacturers instructions

**Surgical face mask** : now Public health measures that apply during pandemic with social distancing of 2m where possible

Disposing of domestic and healthcare risk waste



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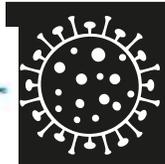
# Additional measures to prevent transmission of possible/confirmed COVID-19 in addition to standard precautions



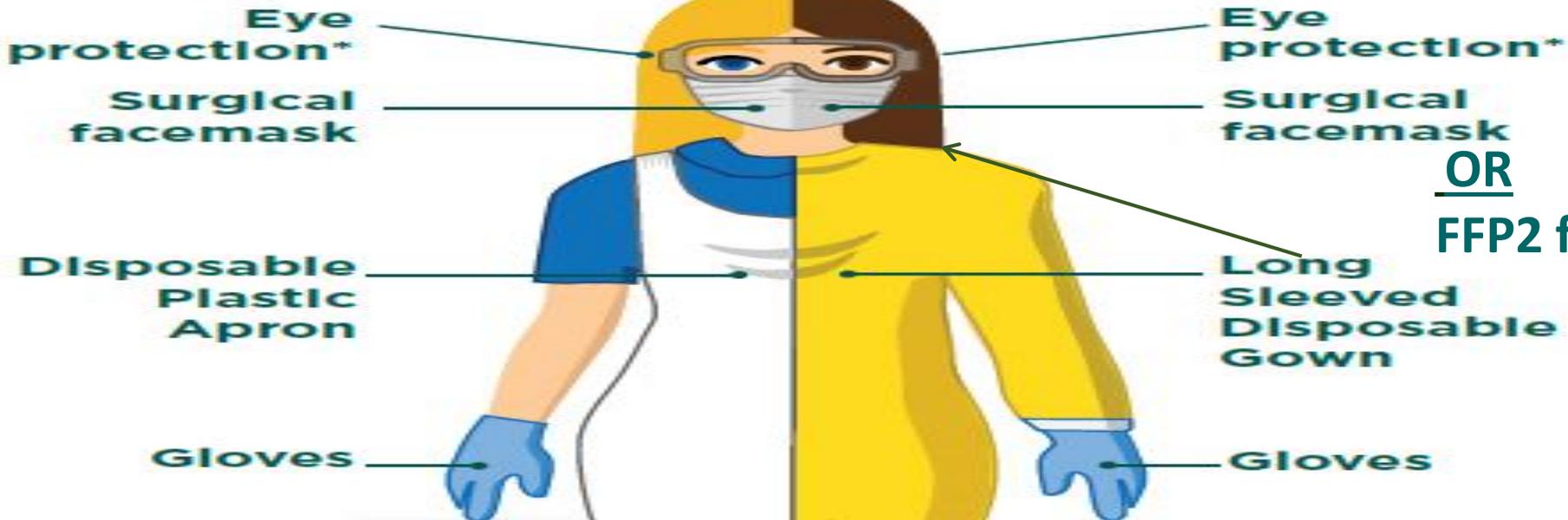
- Additional wearing of PPE for type of care based on:
  - type of activity
  - level of contact with the person you are assisting
- Additional cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment you bring with you on home visits
- Additional waste management this includes double bagging of waste and leaving in secure holding area for 72 hours

**What is the most appropriate PPE to wear and when delivering care in homes where there is COVID-19 or other suspected transmissible infections ?**





PPE type based  
on risk  
assessment



OR  
FFP2 facemask

**Low Contact**

Unlikely to provide opportunities for the transfer of virus/other pathogens to the hands and clothing.

**High Contact**

Increased risk for transfer of virus and other pathogens to the hands and clothing.

*\*Eye protection to be worn on risk assessment*



# Testing and Monitoring in OPD and Home visits

Staff monitoring continues

Risks assessment of people before visits and appointments continues

Risk significantly reduced when staff member and person receiving care are fully vaccinated



Queries submitted  
Thank you for sending these over

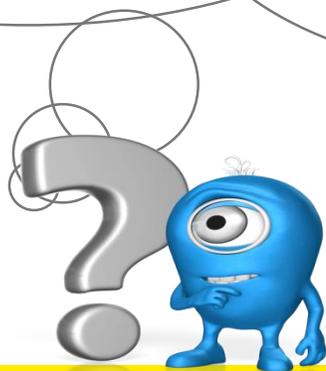




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You may listen to the webinar recording on the link below to hear the webinar and discussion on IPC queries received as outlined in the next slides

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/webinarresourcesforipc>





1. Is it adequate to reduce PPE to mask only for visits (home visit or OPD appointment), together with good hand hygiene?

**Yes where there is no risk identified- back to standard precautions and public health measure**

2. Is it still necessary to formally screen every patient within 24 hours of their appointment for Covid signs/ symptoms or is it adequate as we meet patient at time of appointment to ask if have any Covid symptoms, and proceed from there?

**This may be reduced when the person receiving care is vaccinated**





Q. “Some of our services are reluctant to resume with face to face appointments . Is there any reason why these cannot occur if everyone is well and in majorly of cases everyone is fully vaccinated”?

A. Face to face consultations were never advised against providing COVID risk assessments and public health measures are applied

Q. “What advice can you give around resumption of group rehab sessions as everyone is fully vaccinated with maximum ventilation and social distancing measures in place”?

A. These may resume with the public health measures and don't forget about hand hygiene



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Face coverings are challenging to effectively hold therapy sessions especially reading and expression of emotions which is vital  
Query : therapist and person attending is fully vaccinated and more than 2m apart in a large ventilated room with all other PH measures in place is it reasonable to have face coverings removed?

A. Yes If both person attending and therapist are vaccinated



# Query from vaccinated staff members



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Q. I am fully vaccinated. in the event of developing respiratory illness symptoms (cough and temperature) do I need to isolate from work and get tested?

A. Yes, you need to determine if you have a transmissible respiratory infection

Q. I am fully vaccinated, do I need to wear a mask when delivering care to people who are also fully vaccinated in their home to assist with a shower and personal care?

A. Wearing a mask is not necessary when 2 people in the same house are fully vaccinated



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# Query from vaccinated staff member



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Can we take oropharyngeal swabs in the test centre and how do we get guidance on collecting the sample?

Link to training video



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# Query from Child development Team



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Q. For those of us who have one dose of AstraZeneca, can we share an office with 1 or 2 colleagues without wearing our surgical masks? (with 3 people in the office we cannot maintain 1 meter distance)

A. Even if you are unvaccinated the answer is yes : **if** all staff are well, maintain social distancing, perform hand hygiene and check room is adequately ventilated

Q. “Can up to 10 of us, who have one dose of AstraZeneca – meet in person for a meeting without wearing masks? We have a large room that would be ventilated and we can keep a 2 meter distance if that would be required”?

A. Yes- **if considered necessary** to have 10 people present providing everyone is well and measures outlined are in place



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# PPE comment and query raised



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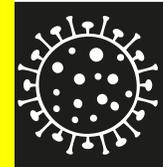
**I wish to raise a concern that home care staff seem to be routinely wearing gloves for all practices in a person's home**

This is not good practice- there are IPC modules that are easily accessible on HSE-land that will assist staff in your service to learn about standard precautions and appropriate use of PPE

**Q Do staff who provide an OPD service or home visit need to wear gloves , long sleeved gown, mask, visor where there is no COVID-19 suspected or confirmed? There is concern around a current surge and the need for additional PPE**

A. No- standard precautions apply with a surgical face mask and public health measures





Q. For fully vaccinated staff working in home care settings, do we need to continue with active monitoring of staff for fever, cough, shortness of breath (temperature checking twice a day) for HCW's visiting homes?

A. Yes , some vaccinated staff may still get infected

Q. Are there implications for health care staff who have family travelling back from abroad?

Government guidelines apply for all occupations and not limited to healthcare





Q. “In the absence of COVID-19 symptoms, in the out-patient setting, when a nurse is taking bloods (venepuncture), what is the appropriate PPE requirement e.g. surgical mask, goggles, gloves, and white plastic apron”

A. Standard precautions ( including surgical face mask) apply with aseptic technique

IPC guidance available on the following link:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/hseinfectionpreventionandcontrolguidanceandframework/Interim%20HSE%20Guidance%20on%20IPC.pdf>



# Query re resident returning to the family home



Q. For people coming on overnight stays/ breaks home from residential setting where they are vaccinated and identified as a close contact are there any implications for staff providing home care visits?

A. Standard precautions and public health measures apply

“Are there any implications for families members?”

Minimise interaction where possible



## For information:

# Draft COVID-19: Normalising Visiting in Long Term Residential Care Facilities (LTRCFs)

V 1.0 07.07.2021 (For implementation  
July 19<sup>th</sup> 2021)



# Webinar Recording and Slide set



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Webinar slide set and audio recording will be available and may be accessed on the following link next week.

[Webinar resources for IPC - Health Protection Surveillance Centre \(hpsc.ie\)](https://www.hpsc.ie)

**Thank you for the engagement today**



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# CAUTION



## DO NOT DROP YOUR GUARD



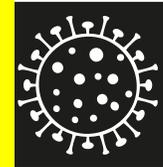
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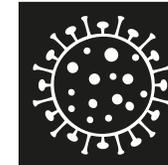
**Thank you for your continued engagement  
on behalf of the HSE AMRIC team**





# Some more online resources and links - preparedness

# Stay safe at work.



Do not come to work if you have symptoms of COVID-19 infection, are a contact or are waiting for a test.  
Remember, the risk doesn't go away when you are out of the clinical area.

**Keep 2M apart or wear a mask if you cannot keep 2M apart.**

## Travel to work



If you have to share transport, always wear a face covering.

Passengers should sit in the rear of the car, away from the driver.

## Break times



Keep 2M from other staff.  
If you can't keep 2M distance, wear a surgical mask.  
Keeping your distance is safer.



## Changing rooms



Keep your distance from other staff.  
Do not bring personal items into clinical areas.  
When you are caring for people, remove your wrist jewellery and fitness bands.



## Public corridors and meeting rooms

Do not stand talking in groups in the corridors. Avoid face to face meetings, but, if you must, please maintain 2M social distance.

If you cannot keep 2M apart, you must wear a mask. Healthcare staff should wear surgical face masks in public work areas.



New stay safe at work poster (online version – poster will be printed and HSE services can order)

- New stay safe at work staff webpages
- New stay safe at work animated video <https://youtu.be/iLR1ZHIMvo0>
- Message from the CEO in his regular staff video
- Key messages from Prof Cormican video <https://youtu.be/mxOjqkLy7QU>
- Social media plan
- Staff broadcast
- RESIST newsletter feature
- Inclusion in HG and Community Services news articles/staff communications
- Health Matters piece



[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie) is the central hub for nationally approved infection control guidance relating to COVID19. It contains a wealth of infection control guidance and resources for caring for people in their own home. You should familiarise yourself with the relevant guidance.

All guidance has been approved by the COVID19 National Public Health Emergency Team (Expert Advisory Group) or the HSE Health Protection and Surveillance Centre.

## **The critical guidance for all staff delivering care in a person's home is:**

COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control [Guidance](#) for Health and Social Care Workers who Visit Homes to Deliver Healthcare



Online training programmes are available on [www.hseland.ie](http://www.hseland.ie) This resource is accessible to any service public or private once they have registered online.

The key infection control resources on this site include videos to demonstrate:

- How to perform hand hygiene using soap and water
- How to perform hand hygiene using alcohol based rub
- Breaking the chain of infection – an online infection control course (with a knowledge test)
- How to put on and take off PPE in a community setting (with a knowledge test)
- How to put on and take off PPE in an acute hospital setting (with a knowledge test)



There are additional videos on HPSC relating to putting on and taking off the new overall type PPE and masks with loops. Also included are scenarios for managing patients in a GP clinic area that are useful for other settings

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/videoresources/>

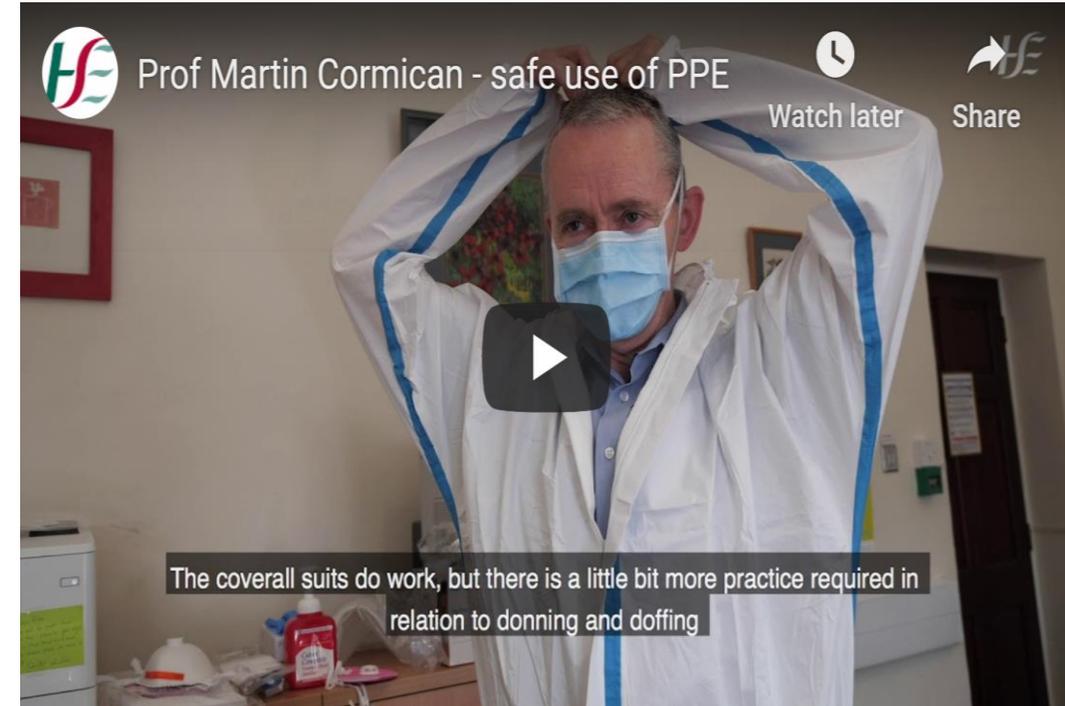
Webinars: there are a number of education webinars on infection control and reducing the risk of transmission of COVID19 in health services.

<https://bit.ly/34YccbT>



There are additional videos on HPSC relating to putting on and taking off the new coverall type PPE and masks with loops. Also included are scenarios for managing patients in a GP clinic area that are useful for primary care settings

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/videoresources/>



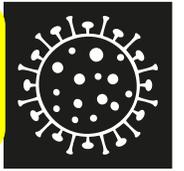


There is a considerable amount of online information for clients, families, the public. All of this information is available on the HSE website and the link is listed below.

There are many pieces of translated materials, videos in Irish sign language and specific materials for patients who have intellectual disability or who have dementia.

Please familiarise yourself with the range of materials accessible here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>



Some samples of online posters available for download – use this link

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

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**COVID-19**

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

## Visitors

**PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES**

Don't visit if you feel unwell with a cough, breathing difficulties, fever or shortness of breath.

<b>Wash</b> your hands well and often to avoid contamination	<b>Cover</b> your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and bin used tissue	<b>Avoid</b> touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands	<b>Clean</b> and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

For more information visit [hse.ie/coronavirus](https://www.hse.ie/coronavirus)

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Cosain tú féin agus daoine eile ó thinneas

### Nigh do lámha

- Tar éis casacht nó sraoth
- Nuair a bhíonn tú ag tabhairt aire do dhuine tinn
- Roimh agus tar éis bia a ullmhú
- Sula n-itheann tú
- Tar éis an leithreas
- Nuair atá do lámha salach
- Tar éis lámh a leagain ar ghearradh, spuaic nó créacht oscailte
- Is féidir cuimilteoir alcóil lámhe a úsáid mura bhfuil cuma shalach ar na lámha

**RESIST** [www.hse.ie/handhygiene](https://www.hse.ie/handhygiene)

**HE**

## COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS THAT MAKE PEOPLE SICK

When you cough or sneeze cover your nose and mouth with a tissue

**OH** Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.

Throw away your tissue!

Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing.

**THANKS!**

**HE** **RESIST**