Covid-19 Information

What is the risk from Covid-19 now in Ireland?
- Covid -19 is still spreading in Ireland, although the number of cases is going down
- There is a risk of catching Covid – 19 wherever there are groups of people close together
- The risk is much higher for people who are not vaccinated with three doses of Covid vaccine
- If there is an outbreak, wearing a surgical mask will help to stop spread
- Using alcohol hand gel/frequent hand washing also helps to stop spread
- It is possible to get Covid-19 more than once, so even if you have had Covid-19, you should still get vaccinated
- It is possible to get Covid-19 after having a vaccine, but it is much less likely that you will be very sick or die if you have been fully vaccinated

What does being fully vaccinated mean?
Full vaccination means two doses a month apart and then another dose 3 to 6 months later (depending on age). This protects very well against **severe COVID-19** (hospitalisation and death) but it is still possible to get COVID-19 infection after vaccination. Public Health recommends that COVID-19 vaccination will be offered to people fleeing Ukrainian as soon as possible and anyone aged 5 years or older is eligible for vaccination. [More information on Vaccine availability in Ireland](#).

How can I stop Covid-19 spreading generally?
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or sleeve - put used tissues into a bin immediately after use.
- Hand hygiene: frequently wash hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol based (at least 60%) hand sanitiser if water is not available.
- Good ventilation: Keep windows open and meet people outside when possible.
- Social distancing: keep 2m away from people outside your family- this is particularly important if there is an outbreak of COVID-19.
- Masks: wearing a face mask by residents and staff while in communal areas is particularly recommended if there is an outbreak of COVID-19.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
The most common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus) are:
- fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above) - including having chills
- dry cough
- fatigue (tiredness)
- COVID-19 symptoms can be like symptoms of cold, flu or hay fever.

Less common symptoms of COVID-19 include: loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this could mean they're completely gone or just different to normal, nasal congestion (runny or blocked nose), conjunctivitis (also known as red eye or pink eye), sore throat, headache, muscle or joint pain (aches and pains), different types of skin rash, nausea or vomiting, diarrhoea, chills or dizziness.

What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?

If you **have symptoms of COVID-19** or other viral respiratory infection, regardless of your vaccination status, you should immediately **self-isolate** and have an **antigen or PCR test** because of living in congregate settings, where COVID-19 can spread rapidly when vaccination rates are low. The manager or staff in your setting will help you to get tested and also help you to register the result with the HSE at https://antigentesting.hse.ie/.

If you are feeling very sick you should contact a GP.

When should I get medical help and hospital treatment?

Most cases of COVID-19 can be treated without medical intervention. But if you are feeling very sick, please contact your local GP (General Practitioner or Family Doctor) for advice.

Urgent advice: Call a GP or out-or-hours GP **immediately** if
- your symptoms of COVID-19 get worse and you start feeling very unwell, particularly if your breathing changes, becomes difficult, or your cough gets worse
- you seem to be getting increasingly short of breath
- you are showing signs of dehydration (for example feeling thirsty, passing infrequent dark yellow and strong-smelling urine, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, feeling tired, dry mouth, lips and eyes)

If viewing this document online, please click on the below links to find a GP:

Find a GP

Find a GP out of hours

If viewing a printed copy of this document, please refer to the HSE website for details on how to access your local GP or Out of Hours GP service:

https://www2.hse.ie/services/find-a-gp/

https://www2.hse.ie/services/find-a-gp-out-of-hours/

Immediate action required: Call 112 or 999 if:
- they are very short of breath and you cannot reach the GP service

How do I self-isolate when I have confirmed or suspected COVID-19?
- If you are in a house or a hotel room, you need to isolate in your room. If you are in a room with children or other family members you will all need to isolate together.
- Where it is not possible, the manager of your facility can contact the HSE about transferring you to a national dedicated isolation facility. Your local GP may need to make this referral. This will happen if you are sharing a living space with other families.
- You should not use communal areas in your facility.
- You should keep away from other people, if possible, – especially older people or anyone with a long-term medical condition.
- You should use a different bathroom to others if possible and if not possible keep the bathroom very clean.
- You should cover your coughs and sneezes using a tissue or elbow – clean your hands properly afterwards.

- Wash your hands properly and often.
- Clean your room every day with a household cleaner or disinfectant.
- If you are aged 12 years or older and have COVID-19 you should wear a medical or respirator (FFP2) face mask if you have to be in the same room as anyone else during self-isolation and for 3 days after you finish self-isolation and also keep a 2 meter distance away from another person. Children aged 9-12 years old should wear a well fitted mask as much as is reasonably practical during the 10-day period.

When does my self-isolation end?

If you have symptoms, but your Covid-19 test is negative, you should isolate until you feel better for 48 hours.

If you are a confirmed case of COVID-19 you should stay in isolation for **7 full days** (if symptoms have substantially or fully resolved for the final 2 days (48 hours) of the self-isolation period, if not you may need to stay longer).

On exiting self-isolation after 7 full days, you should continue to:
- Wear an FFP2 mask or medical grade face mask (surgical mask) in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where they are in close contact with other people.
- Limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces (excluding childcare and educational settings).
- Avoid contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19.
- Follow all public health protective measures.

All for another **three days**.

If the case is a child they can stop isolating after 7 full days and return to childcare and educational settings, once symptoms have substantially or fully resolved for the final 2 days (48 hours) of the self-isolation period.

What should my close contacts do?

If a close contact has no symptoms, they do not need to restrict movements, regardless of vaccination status. However, public health recommends they have 3 antigen tests:
- the first as soon as possible after they know they are a close contact,
- then 3 days later,
- and also 7 days after contact with a COVID-19 case.

If any close contact develops symptoms, follow the advice on page 1 and 2 for a person with symptoms of COVID-19.

What should happen if there are multiple cases (or an outbreak) of COVID-19 in my facility?

- An outbreak of COVID-19 occurs when there are two linked cases in the same setting.
- Every effort will be made to move people who have COVID-19 to dedicated isolation area within the setting or with the help of the HSE they will move people who have COVID-19 off site to dedicated isolation facility.
- The manager or staff at the facility will provide antigen test for those who are **symptomatic** in the setting.

- The manager or staff at the facility will provide antigen testing for **close contacts** who do not have symptoms.
- The manager or staff at the facility will ensure residents have ready access to PPE and sanitisation products.
- The manager or staff at the facility will ensure residents can wear a FFP2 or surgical mask while on the premises.
- Alcohol gel and other cleaning products should be readily available throughout the premises.
- Staff will encourage all residents to wear masks when not in their rooms (unless they are outside). A box of masks should be delivered to each room.
- Staff should identify all significant touch-points (door handles, tables, elevators) and increase the frequency of cleaning such surfaces.
- Staff should encourage social distancing, adherence to hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Staff should increase ventilation where possible by opening windows and doors (subject to weather conditions and comfort level of room occupants) to allow air flow.