COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Department of **Health** | An Roinn Sláinte | Männystrie O Poustie

HSC | **Health and Social Care**

HSC update

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways.

The Health and Care system is focusing its efforts on avoiding the spread of infection between people.

The majority of people who get the disease will have a mild illness and will not need hospital treatment.

However, it can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people and those with long term conditions, like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

Over the coming weeks further measures are likely to be introduced for older and vulnerable people.

We will clearly announce when we ask the public to move to this next stage.

Protect yourself

- Wash your hands more often, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

For the latest information:

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus

Community Pharmacy

- Community pharmacies have a critical role to play in how we respond to the challenges that COVID-19 brings.
- Do not go into a pharmacy if you have a temperature or persistent cough. Ask a friend, family member or neighbour to go on your behalf.
- There is enough medicine for all. There is no need to order extra supplies.
- Prescriptions will normally be ready for collection within 48 hours of ordering.

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

How to self-isolate

- Self-isolation means staying indoors and avoiding contact with other people.

- You need to do this if you have symptoms of coronavirus. This is to stop other people from getting it.

- Stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away from other people in your home if possible.

- Consider what can be done for vulnerable people in the household.

- Talk to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need to make your stay at home a success.

- Think about and plan how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications that you will need during this period.

- Make sure that you keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

Social Distancing

- Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people.

- Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible.

- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this.

- Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs.

- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch by phone, internet, and social media.

Supporting vulnerable people

- Be a good neighbour and consider how you can help older people and those living alone
- Practice good infection control if you are supporting a person self-isolating.
- If you receive support from health and social care organisations this will continue as normal.
- Care homes may limit the number of visitors.
- Try using telephone, FaceTime or Skype to stay in touch with older relatives.

More at:
https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/social-care-will-play-vital-role-during-severe-covid-19-challenges