Information for "Close Contacts" of a confirmed case of Coronavirus

Since Friday 27th March 2020, the Government has advised everyone to stay at home wherever possible, with minor exceptions, to reduce the spread of the virus. Staying at home is the best way to minimise the risk of coronavirus to your friends, family and communities.

This information sheet provides advice to people who have had close contact with a person who has been confirmed as having coronavirus.

A close contact is:
Anyone who has spent more than 15 minutes, face-to-face, within two meters of a person with coronavirus in any setting, for example anyone living in the same household or someone who has shared a closed space with a confirmed case for more than two hours.

What do I need to do if I am a close contact?
You will be contacted by a contact tracing team if you have been identified as having been in close contact with someone with coronavirus. You do not need to contact the HSE first. When you are called, you will be asked whether you have any of the following symptoms:

- A new cough – this can be a dry cough or a productive (bringing up phlegm) cough
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties
- Fever (a high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above on a thermometer) or chills.

Even if you do not have any of these symptoms, and you are a household contact of the suspected or confirmed case, you will be asked to begin Restricted Movements (see below for explanation), which will last until 14 days after the last time you came into contact with the person who has been diagnosed with coronavirus. If you work in healthcare, you need to contact your manager and Occupational Health and let them know that you have been identified as a close contact of a case of coronavirus.

You can become a close contact more than once if you have two separate exposures – Restricted Movements will then apply to you again for 14 days after your last exposure.

If you develop any respiratory symptoms distress, e.g. a cough, shortness of breath:
- You will need to self-isolate without delay (see below for what this means) and phone your GP surgery straight away.
- Your GP surgery will take your details and have your GP call you back. Your GP will discuss your symptoms with you over the phone or on a video call and advise you of the next steps you need to take, including possibly arranging testing for coronavirus.
- If you get very ill and it is an emergency, you should call 999 and make sure the emergency service is aware that your symptoms might be due to coronavirus.
- Do not attend your local Emergency Department or GP in person unless told to do so by a medical professional
- Follow all of the advice given by your doctor.

If you are tested for coronavirus and it comes back negative, you should still complete the 14 days restricted movements.

You should always engage in regular hand washing and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the bend of your elbow when coughing and sneezing to prevent the spread of infection.

Restricted Movements vs. Self-isolation

Restricted Movements

Restricted Movements means staying at home and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. Many people who have been exposed to coronavirus will not develop coronavirus, but they should all still restrict movements in case they do. Restricted movements may also be known as self-quarantine.

- You do this to stop other people, particularly vulnerable or high-risk people in your community, from getting coronavirus.
- You need to restrict your movements for 14 days if you do not have symptoms of coronavirus but you are:
    - a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus (start from the last time you were in contact)
    - living in a household with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus (for more information go to https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/factsheetsandresources/Advice%20sheet%20for%20people%20who%20live%20in%20the%20same%20home%20as%20a%20person%20with%20COVID.V4.30.03.2020.pdf)
    - returning to Ireland from another country (start from the day you arrived in Ireland)

Self-isolation

Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. This includes staying away from other people in your household. You need to do this if you have any symptoms of CORONAVIRUS - this is to stop other people from getting infected, especially vulnerable people in your community.

You will need to self-isolate:

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus
- before you get tested for coronavirus
- while you wait for test results
- if you have had a positive test result for coronavirus.

For more information on self-isolation, go to https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/factsheetsandresources/Patient%20information%20sheet%20for%20self-%20isolation.%20V5.30.03.2020.pdf.

If you have a negative or "not detected" test result you can stop self-isolation 48 hours after your symptoms resolve, but if you are a close contact you need to finish the period of Restricted Movements.

If you live with other people and you are self-isolating:

- Stay in a room with a window you can open.
- If you can, use a toilet and bathroom that no one else in the house uses.
- If you have to share a bathroom with others, use the bathroom last and then clean it thoroughly.
- Do not share any items you've used with other people.

There are two criteria for finishing self-isolation, and you can only finish when both have been fulfilled:

1. It's been 14 days since your first symptoms started
2. You haven't had a fever for 5 days

For example, if you started having headaches or coughing on the 1st of the month, and you had your last fever on the 12th, you need to wait until the 17th to finish self-isolation. If your last symptom was on the 6th, you would only need to wait until the 14th.

You can get more information on www.hse.ie

For Citizens Information Centre advice on CORONAVIRUS follow this link
https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/covid19_overview.html