



Returning Healthcare Worker Contact Information leaflet

For HCWs returning from any international travel outside of the island of Ireland

V7.0, 20th Apr 2020

PLEASE NOTE: Because the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus in the human population, new information is becoming available as doctors and scientists study the virus and how it affects people. While the information contained in this pack was accurate at the time it was printed, we advise you to check the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website at www.hpsc.ie for the most up-to-date information. The HPSC website is updated frequently as new information about the COVID-19 becomes available.

Please read this letter and the enclosed information leaflets carefully.

You have been identified as a possible Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) contact, as you have travelled outside of the island of Ireland. You are now excluded from work and must restrict movements and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after your return date.

During the time that you are being monitored (i.e. for 14 days after your return) :

You must not go to work

If asymptomatic,

- You should limit your social interactions in so far as possible. This means staying at home or your hotel room.
- You must adhere to national guidance on social distancing and restricted movement.
- Where possible, arrange your groceries online or have some family or friends drop it off to the house.
- You can go outside on your own for walks, runs or cycles.
- You should not use public transport.
- You should avoid contact with at risk or highly vulnerable people <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html>.
- Avoid the use of anti-pyretics, (for example paracetamol, ibuprofen) while undertaking monitoring in case they mask symptoms.
- 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.
- Do not donate blood for at least 28 days after your close contact with a Coronavirus case

These restrictions can be a source of stress for some people. There are many things that may help you cope better with the period of monitoring:

- **Set goals:** Setting goals and achieving them can give you a sense of control. The goals must be realistic in the given circumstances and could include writing a diary or learning new skills.
- **Keep active:** Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, develop mind games to stimulate thinking, for example remember the plots of movies or passages from books. The possibilities are unlimited.
- **Look for or inject humour into the situation:** Even smiling and laughing inwardly can provide relief from anxiety and frustration.

- **Eat sufficiently and exercise as much as possible:** This will help keep the body strong and counteracts the physical effects of stress.
- **Actively use stress management techniques:** Physical relaxation techniques can reduce stress levels and are useful methods to manage pain and emotional turmoil. Most people are familiar with stress management techniques but not all use them in practice; however, this is the time to the use of such techniques.
- **Accept feelings:** Being in a stressful situation can cause a lot of different emotional reactions like anger, frustration, anxiety, regrets, second guessing yourself, self-blame etc. These feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. (See EAP details for further support).

What happens next?

For 14 days following your return from travel, please monitor yourself for the following symptoms (**Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath, Difficulty Breathing**).

Each day you will receive a call/text from the Occupational Health Service reminding you to contact your Occupational Health Service if you develop any symptoms.

If you develop a fever, a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing:

Immediately isolate yourself from others (for example stay in a different room from the rest of your family with the door closed).

- a. **Do not attend** your GP, including their out-of-hours/on-call service or local Emergency Department unless told to do so Occupational Health, Public Health or GP.
- b. You should phone your GP and identify yourself as a symptomatic returning healthcare worker.
- c. If acutely unwell you may need to contact the ambulance service. (**please check local GP /GP out of hours contact details and add below**).

If you are tested for coronavirus and it comes back negative, you should still complete the 14 days restricted movements. If test results indicate you have COVID-19, please let your manager and Occupational Health Service (**see below link for contact numbers**) know.

Contact Details:

- GP Service: _____
- GP Out of Hours service: _____
- Employee Assistance and Counselling Service Contact Details: _____

See <https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/employee-assistance-programme-contact-details-for-counsellors.pdf>

Occupational Health Service: _____
See <http://workwell.ie/contact-list/contact-your-local-occupational-health-service/>

Further Information

Further information including frequently asked questions is available at www.hpse.ie at the following link:

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

Or you can contact the COVID-19 HCW helpdesk – **1850 420 420**
9am-6pm Mon-Fri; 10am-4pm Sat-Sun;