



Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Casual Contact Information Leaflet V7.0, 08th 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 by your line manager as a casual contact of a case of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). As a result, you require passive casual contact monitoring for 14 days after your last potential exposure to a case of COVID-19 under the supervision of the Occupational Health Service (OHS). The aim of casual contact monitoring is to identify casual contacts who develop symptoms consistent with Novel Corona Virus at the earliest opportunity, to help prevent the further spread of the virus to family, friends and colleagues and to fast track symptomatic casual contacts to the appropriate medical facility for further assessment, appropriate isolation and treatment if necessary.

What is Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that circulate among animals, with some causing illness in humans from the common cold to more severe diseases such as as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). In December 2019, a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was first isolated from three patients with pneumonia, connected to the cluster of acute respiratory illness cases from Wuhan, China.

How is Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) transmitted?

Coronaviruses can be transmitted from person to person, usually after close contact with an infected patient, for example in a household, workplace or healthcare setting. Coronaviruses are mainly transmitted by large respiratory droplets and direct or indirect contact with infected secretions. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and good infection prevention and control precautions are effective at minimising risk but can never eliminate it.

What is my risk?

We are still learning about how easily the virus spreads between people so, as a precautionary measure, we are advising Healthcare Workers with **protected exposure** to an infected patient to self-monitor for symptoms.

Protected Exposure = Recommended infection control precautions followed, including the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment during the infectious period.

Prevention of Transmission of Coronavirus :

All staff should attend the Infection Prevention and Control Team training sessions which provide information on:

- Education, instruction and training in relation to the nature of the Coronavirus
 - Information on the mode of transmission.
 - Information on steps that staff are required to take to protect themselves.
 - Appropriate work practices including standard, contact and airborne precautions.
 - The use of personal protection equipment (PPE) appropriate for the risk and the tasks.
- After receiving training, staff should be able to demonstrate competency in performing all Coronavirus-related infection control practices and procedures, specifically in donning and doffing proper PPE.

Contacts and Follow-up:

There are two types of follow up of HCWs with potential workplace contact:

- Close Contact which requires active follow up
- Casual Contact which require passive follow up.

Please refer to the Risk Assessment of Health Care Workers with Potential Exposure to COVID-19 at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/occupationalhealthguidance/>

Casual Contact Passive Monitoring:

As you have been identified as a casual contact, self-monitoring is required for the 14 days after your last potential exposure to a case of COVID-19.

You should self-monitor for **fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing on a daily basis.**

If asymptomatic,

- No additional restriction on movement, interactions with others or work is advised, although you must adhere to national requirements for social distancing and restricted movement
- You should continue to attend work.
- You should remain contactable by phone at all times.
- 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. See advice sheet enclosed "**Infection Prevention Advice for Healthcare Workers**".
- Avoid the use of anti-pyretics, (for example paracetamol, ibuprofen) while undertaking monitoring in case they mask symptoms
- As a contact you should not donate blood for at least two months after your last contact with a Coronavirus case.

If you Develop Symptoms:

If you develop a **fever, a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**, you should do the following:

- Immediately **isolate** yourself from others (for example stay in a different room from the rest of your family with the door closed or if in work, go to an office).

- You **should not attend your** GP, including the out-of-hours/on-call service or the local Emergency Department unless told to do so by the Occupational Health Service, Public Health or your GP.
- You should phone the **Occupational Health Service during the hours set out below** and identify yourself as a **symptomatic casual contact** of the Novel Corona Virus. If acutely unwell you should phone your local GP service or, if necessary, the ambulance service. (**please check local GP out of hours contact details and add below**).
- If in the workplace, please inform your manager and they will assist in making contact with the Occupational Health service or if in a hospital setting, the Emergency Department to arrange testing if possible.

Contact Details:

- Occupational Health Service: Hours _____ Days: _____ Phone _____
- 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>

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**
8am-8pm Mon-Fri; 10am-5pm Sat-Sun;