

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

An information guide



COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

What is COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?

A coronavirus is a type of virus.

As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus infection include fever and cough; in some people, the illness may progress to severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus 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.

COVID-19 is a new disease caused by a recently discovered virus, first identified in Wuhan City, China. Cases of COVID-19 have now been identified in other countries. COVID-19 had not occurred in humans before.

How COVID-19 is spread?

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission; these are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

There are 2 routes people could become infected:

Secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.

It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face).

Symptoms

The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of any of the following:

- A new continuous cough.
- A high temperature.
- A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above you must stay at home and arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19.

To request a test please go to www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test and follow the instructions on screen.

Who can ask for a test?

You can ask for a test:

- For yourself, if you have coronavirus symptoms now (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- For someone you live with, if they have coronavirus symptoms

You need to get the test done in the first 5 days of having symptoms. It is important that you request the test as soon as you start with any symptoms.

What the test involves

The test usually involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud.

You can do the swab yourself (if you are aged 12 or over) or someone can do it for you. Children aged 11 or under cannot do the swab themselves. Their parent or guardian will have to swab test them.

What do we mean by possible or confirmed coronavirus infection (COVID-19)?

- **Possible infection** is where a person has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and is currently awaiting a test result.
- **Confirmed infection** is where a person has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Patients

If symptoms or signs occur in the 10 days after exposure, such as influenza like illness (ILI), pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), a new cough or fever, the relevant diagnostic tests, including the COVID-19 test, should be performed.

On discharge, patients should be given the '**Management of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) at home**' leaflet which has written advice to stay at home, if less than 10 days has elapsed since their exposure.

For patients admitted from the Emergency Department (ED), if they shared an exposure window with the patient and a shared waiting area, once discharged home from A&E, they should be advised to monitor for symptoms until the end of a 10-day observation period and, if they become unwell, to refer to the '**Management of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) at home**' leaflet.

Visitors

Visiting is suspended with immediate effect and until further notice.

The only exceptional circumstances where one visitor – an immediate family member or carer – will be permitted to visit are listed below:

- The patient you wish to visit is receiving end-of-life care.
- You are the birthing partner accompanying a woman in labour.
- You are a parent or appropriate adult visiting your child.

Please contact the ward or department in advance to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Your health, safety and wellbeing, that of our patients, communities and individuals and teams across the organisation remain our absolute priority.

Please find other ways of keeping in touch with your loved ones in hospital, like phone and video calls.

Everyone should follow the expert national guidance on social distancing and self-isolation, staying at home wherever possible, to help limit the spread of coronavirus, protect the most vulnerable people in our communities and our NHS.

For the latest public advice and guidance from the NHS, please go online to **www.nhs.uk/coronavirus**

Testing for COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Who will be tested?

Testing for COVID-19 (Coronavirus) will be performed on patients who have the symptoms of coronavirus infection and patients who need to be admitted to the hospital.

Patients will be retested if they stay in hospital for more than 7 days. The Infection Prevention and Control Team will occasionally recommend additional testing for patients and staff.

Do not attend the hospital if you think you have symptoms. You need to return home and self-isolate for 10 days. In the case of severe symptoms, contact NHS111 or your GP for further advice.

What happens once I have been tested?

Once the swabs have been taken they will be sent for testing and it will take between 24 - 36 hours for the results. During this time you will be treated in an isolation area with social distancing. Staff will be wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) whilst they treat you.

Please do not be alarmed by the PPE as not only is this protecting the staff from COVID-19 and allowing them to continue to treat other patients this is also protecting other vulnerable patients within the hospital.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897


For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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