



Advice for people who share a home with someone who has symptoms of Coronavirus V4.30.03.2020

The information in this leaflet is for people sharing a home with someone who:

- is self-isolating at home because they have symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- is waiting to be tested for Coronavirus
- has been tested and is positive for Coronavirus
- has been tested and is negative for Coronavirus

Since Friday 27th of March 2020, Government advice is that people should remain at home except within certain limited circumstances, to reduce the spread of the virus. If you share a home with someone who has or may have Coronavirus, you need to **restrict your movements as much as possible**. This is to reduce the risk of the virus spreading beyond your household.

What does 'restricted movements' mean?

Restricted movements means avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. It is sometimes called 'self-quarantine'. This is to stop other people from getting Coronavirus. Even though you may not have symptoms, you share a home with someone who does. For this reason you should avoid leaving your home unless it is absolutely necessary to do so.

Restricted movements means that you stay at home and:

- ✗ Do not go to school, college or work*.
- ✗ Do not use public transport.
- ✗ Do not go to meetings or any crowded setting
- ✗ Do not have visitors in your home.
- ✗ Do not go shopping - where possible, order your groceries online or have some family or friends drop them off.
- ✗ Keep away from older people, anyone with a long-term medical condition and anyone who is pregnant.
- ✗ Do not travel outside or within Ireland.

*Essential workers may be allowed to return to work before the 14 day period if a derogation from their management is issued.

How long do I have to restrict my movements for?

You should restrict your movements for 14 days. The 14 days begins when the person who has symptoms of Coronavirus begins to self-isolate. If it is not possible for them to self-isolate at home, contact your doctor for specific advice.

If you remain well, you can return to normal activities as advised by the Government after the 14 days.

If the person in your home who has symptoms is tested for Coronavirus and the virus is not detected, you can return to normal activities, as advised by the Government, straight away. However, it is possible that the person has another infectious illness, such as flu, so avoid contact with them as much as possible until 48 hours after their symptoms have gone away.

If you yourself begin to have symptoms of Coronavirus during these 14 days, self-isolate within the home and contact your doctor by phone for advice.

Keep yourself safe and well

- It is very easy to become anxious and lonely when you have to spend time on your own. Stay in contact with family and friends by phone during this time. For more information on minding your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak go to www.hse.ie or www.yourmentalhealth.ie. Older people can telephone the charity Alone on 0818 222 024 from Monday to Sunday, 8am to 8pm.
- Although you have been asked to stay at home it is important you keep yourself mobile by getting up and moving around as much as possible. If you have your own outdoor space you can go out to get some fresh air but please keep away from other people, including neighbours. Keep a distance of at least 1 metre (3ft) but where possible 2 metres (6.5 feet) from other people.

1. Clean your hands often (wash with soap or handrub/gel)

- Clean your hands regularly. **This is one of the most important things you can do.**
- Use moisturiser on your hands after washing, to stop your skin becoming dry and sore.
- Be especially careful to do this anytime you have had to touch the person who is sick or anything they have used. Use household or rubber gloves for this purpose, where possible.

2. Don't spend much time with the person who is sick

- It is best to stay out of the room they are in as much as possible and avoid touching. Try to stay at least 1 metre (3 feet) and where possible 2 metres (6.5 feet) away from them.
- You can use your phones to talk, even though you are in the same home.

3. Make sure that any room you have to share with the person (kitchen, bathroom) is well ventilated.

- Keep windows open as much as you can.

4. Do not invite visitors into the home

- Do not invite or allow unnecessary visitors to come into the house.

- If someone urgently needs to come to the house, keep them at least 1 metre (3 feet) and where possible 2 metres (6.5 feet) away from the person who is sick.

5. Be sure that people who are high risk of severe illness are not near the person who is sick

- Don't let anyone who is at high risk of severe infection care for the person who is sick or come close to them. This includes people who live in your home who:
 - have a long-term illness
 - may have a weak immune system
 - are over 70 years
 - are pregnant
- Try to avoid contact with these higher-risk people too during the 14-day period when you are restricting your movements.

6. Avoid sharing household things

- Do not share food, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, knives, forks, spoons, towels, bedding or other items with the patient until the items have been carefully washed.
- Wash the items in a dishwasher or with washing up liquid and hot water. Wear household or rubber gloves if available. The gloves can be washed and dried after use. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after removing the gloves.
- If the person who is sick has used remote controls or similar items, clean them before someone else in the house uses them.

7. Toileting and bathing

- The person with symptoms of Coronavirus should have their own toilet and bathroom if possible.
- If they can't have their own toilet or bathroom, check that the room is clean after use, and clean your hands afterwards.
- Do not share towels.

8. Household cleaning

- Clean surfaces in the home with a cleaning product every day. This includes kitchen counters, table-tops, doorknobs, banisters, bathroom fixtures, toilets and toilet handles, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- Use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these are very effective at getting rid of the virus. Follow the instructions on the manufacturer's label and check they can be used on the surface you are cleaning.
- Wear household or rubber gloves when cleaning surfaces or handling dirty laundry. Wash and dry the gloves after use. Always wash your hands after you take off the gloves.

- Reusable cleaning cloths can be washed in a hot wash cycle of a washing machine after use.
- Place disposable gloves and cleaning cloths in a plastic waste bag after using them. (See advice about managing rubbish below.)

9. Laundry

- Wash laundry at the highest temperature that the material can stand.
- Tumble dry items and iron using a hot setting or steam iron if required.
- Wear household or rubber gloves when handling dirty laundry and hold the items away from your clothing.
- Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry, whether you used gloves or not.
- Do not send laundry to a laundrette.

10. Managing rubbish

- Put all personal waste including used tissues and all cleaning waste in a plastic rubbish bag.
- Tie the bag when it is almost full and then place it into a second bin bag and tie.
- Once the bag has been tied securely, leave it somewhere safe and secure. The bag should be left for three days before collection by your waste company.
- Other household waste can be disposed of as normal without any time delay.

Caring for the person who has or may have Coronavirus: Important points

Only one person should look after the sick person, if possible. Ideally this would be someone who is not in an at-risk group for severe infection (see page 3, number 5).

- If you are caring for the person, try and keep your distance as much as possible. Stay at least 1 metre (3 feet) and where possible 2 metres (6.5 feet) away and avoid touching them.
- If you have to touch them, clean your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Clean your hands regularly and if necessary help the person you are caring for to clean their hands also.
- Do not touch your face while caring for someone else.
- If you have to clean phlegm or spit from their face use a clean tissue, put it into a waste bag and wash your hands thoroughly.
- Call the person's doctor for advice if the person becomes unwell, especially with difficulty breathing.

- If you are caring for an older person watch out for **new onset confusion** and contact the person's doctor immediately.
- Call the emergency services at 112 or 999 if the person becomes very unwell and it is an emergency. Tell them that the person may have or has been diagnosed with Coronavirus.
- If adequate self-isolation of the sick person cannot be maintained and you need to give them significant help with self-care activities, you will need to restrict your movements for the 14 days since they first became unwell and for a further 14 days after that.