

# Coronavirus

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Copied from HSE Website

- - [Coronavirus](#)
- - [Advice for people returning from affected areas](#)
- - [Advice for healthcare professionals](#)

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new respiratory illness. It has not previously been seen in humans.

This type of coronavirus is also known as 2019-nCov or novel coronavirus.

## Symptoms

It can take up to 14 days for the symptoms of coronavirus to appear.

These symptoms may include:

- a cough
- shortness of breath
- breathing difficulties
- fever (high temperature)

Coronavirus can also cause more severe illness including:

- pneumonia
- severe acute respiratory syndrome
- kidney failure

## Risk of catching coronavirus

There has been no confirmed case of coronavirus in Ireland.

Following the increased number of COVID-19 cases in Italy, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) now rates the risk of similar clusters of cases in other EU countries as **moderate to high**.

If there is a case here, health professionals will try to contact anyone who has been in contact with the infected person.

You do not need to follow any advice in relation to coronavirus if you have:

- not been to one of the affected areas

- not been in contact with a person who has coronavirus
- not been to a healthcare facility where patients with coronavirus were treated

## **Test - when you may need to be tested for coronavirus**

You will only need to be tested for coronavirus if you have symptoms and have in the last 14 days been:

- in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus
- to one of the affected areas
- in a healthcare centre or hospital where patients with coronavirus were being treated

If your doctor thinks that you need a test for coronavirus, they will tell you where the test will be done. They will also tell you when to expect your results.

Read [advice on what you need to do if you have been to one of the affected areas in the last 14 days](#).

## **Self-isolate - when you may need to**

You only need to isolate yourself from other people if in the last 14 days you have:

- been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus
- recently been to one of the affected areas – and have developed [symptoms](#) of coronavirus
- recently been in a healthcare centre or hospital where patients with coronavirus were being treated and have developed [symptoms](#) of coronavirus

## **How coronavirus is spread**

Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets.

You could get the virus if you:

- come into close contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing or sneezing
- touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on

Because it's a new illness, we do not know how easily the virus spreads from person to person. We do not know if someone can spread the virus before they show symptoms.

The virus may only survive a few hours if someone who has it coughs or sneezes on a surface. Simple household disinfectants can kill the virus on surfaces. Clean the surface first and then use a disinfectant.

## **Packages from China**

You cannot get coronavirus from packages or food that has come from China or elsewhere.

There is no evidence that animals or animal products legally imported into the EU are a health risk due to coronavirus.

## Protect yourself

### Do

- wash your hands properly and regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- follow the [travel advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs if travelling to China](#)

### Don't

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

The flu vaccine does not protect against coronavirus.

Wash your hands:

- after coughing or sneezing
- after toilet use
- before eating
- before and after preparing food
- if you are in contact with a sick person, especially those with respiratory symptoms
- if your hands are dirty
- if you have handled animals or animal waste

Read a [step-by-step guide on how to properly wash your hands and avoid infection](#)

## Facemasks

### Don't:

- do not use a face mask if you feel well and do not have symptoms - there's no evidence that using masks is of any benefit if you are not sick

### Do:

- wash your hands properly and regularly
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze

You should use a facemask if you:

- have or may have coronavirus
- are in close contact with someone who has or may have coronavirus
- are a healthcare worker in close contact with people who may have or have coronavirus

## Treatment

There is no specific treatment for coronavirus. But many of the symptoms of the virus can be treated.

If you get the virus, your healthcare professional will advise treatment based on your symptoms.

Antibiotics do not work against coronavirus or any viruses. They only work against bacterial infections.

## Vaccine

There is currently no vaccine to treat or protect against coronavirus.

## At-risk groups

We do not know for sure which groups are most at risk of complications if they catch coronavirus.

But it is likely you are more at risk if you catch coronavirus and:

- are 65 years of age and over
- have a long-term medical condition – for example, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or liver disease

## Children and coronavirus

If your child has recently travelled to any of the affected areas, follow the guidance above.

Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and properly.

Read more advice on [how to prevent your child from catching or spreading viral infections](#).

## Pets

There is no evidence that pets such as cats and dogs can catch or spread coronavirus.

## Avoid all non-essential travel to China

### Don't:

- do not travel to China unless it is essential that you go
- do not visit animal or bird markets in China
- do not go to places in China where live or dead animals are handled
- do not visit anyone in China who is ill with cold or flu-like symptoms such as sneezing or coughing
- do not touch animals and their poo (droppings) in China

Wash your hands properly and regularly with soap and water.

Follow the [up-to-date travel information from the Department of Foreign Affairs](#)