



Returning Healthcare Worker Contact Information leaflet

- For HCWs returning from areas with presumed ongoing transmission of COVID-19, requiring active monitoring in work.

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 Public Health as a Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) contact, as you have travelled to an area of ongoing transmission, however you have been assigned to a risk category that allows you to return to work, while undergoing active monitoring by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). You will be monitored for 14 days after your return date. The aim of active contact monitoring is to identify contacts who develop symptoms consistent with Novel Coronavirus 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 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 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 **potential exposure** in an area of ongoing transmission to monitor for symptoms.

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

- **You may continue to work**

If asymptomatic,

- You do not need to limit your social interactions.



- No restriction on movement, interactions with others or work is advised.
- No restrictions on travel whether national or international are advised.
- You should continue to attend work.
- You should remain contactable by phone at all times.
- 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. See advice sheet enclosed “**Infection Prevention Advice for Healthcare Workers**”.

What happens next?

1. For 14 days after your return from the affected region, please monitor yourself for the following symptoms (Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath, Difficulty Breathing) and record them each day on the sheet enclosed.
2. Each day you will receive a call/text from the OHS asking if you have developed any of the aforementioned symptoms. It is important that you respond to this call/text and if you miss a call, return it as soon as possible.

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

Immediately put on one of the surgical masks provided in this pack and 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 empty office).

- Once you are isolated from others you may remove the surgical mask. If you need to come in contact with other people for any reason please put on a surgical mask before contact.
- Do not attend your GP, including their out-of-hours/on-call service.
- Do not attend your local Emergency Department unless told to do so Occupational Health, Public Health or the ED Consultant.
- You should phone the Occupational Health Service during the hours set out below and identify yourself as a symptomatic returning healthcare worker contact of the Novel Corona Virus. Outside of these hours you should phone your local GP 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.

Contact Details:

- Occupational Health Service: Hours _____ (Monday – Friday): Phone _____
- Occupational Health Service: 8am – 8pm (Saturday/Sunday): **087 6197040**
- GP Out of Hours service: _____
- Employee Assistance and Counseling Service (24-hour Free phone): **1800409388**

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/>