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Letter for patient; Casual contact

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 HSE website at www.hse.ie for the most up-to-date information. The website is updated frequently as new information about the COVID-19 becomes available.

As you may have been in contact with a case of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), please find information and instructions for follow-up below.

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been identified in humans before.

What is my risk?

Coronaviruses can be transmitted from person to person but this is usually after close contact with an infected patient, for example in a household, workplace or health care setting. Given that we are still learning about how easily the virus spreads between people, as a precautionary measure, we are also contacting those who have had a more limited contact with an infected patient. There may be a small risk of picking up the virus and becoming unwell or passing the virus on to other people.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 infection can include any of the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing

What happens next?

1. Please read this letter and the enclosed information leaflet carefully.
2. **If you have or develop any of the symptoms above within the 14 days from last exposure (this will be verified on the phone with you)**

- a. Please immediately **isolate yourself from others** (for example stay in a different room from the rest of your family with the door closed).
 - b. **Call your GP**. They will discuss your symptoms with you and advise you what the next steps you need to take are, including arranging testing for the novel coronavirus.
 - c. If it is outside of hours please contact an out of hours GP service, clearly say that you are **a contact with exposure to Novel Coronavirus** and tell them your symptoms.
 - d. **Do not attend** your local Emergency Department unless told to do so by a doctor.
 - e. **Do not attend** your GP, including their out-of-hours/on-call service unless told to do so by a doctor.
- 3.** 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 enclosed "Recommendations to prevent the spread of infection".

We thank you in advance for your continued cooperation. If you are concerned, please call the Department of Public Health at the number below.

Further information, including Frequently Asked Questions, is available at www.hse.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Deirdre Murray
Specialist in Public Health Medicine
MCRN: 011936

Contact details; Department of Public Health
0214927601

8am -8pm Monday to Sunday

1. Information leaflets for casual contacts


Recommendations to prevent the spread of infection

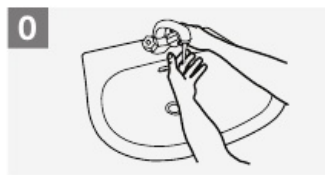
- Try to avoid touching your mouth and nose
- Regular **hand washing (Figure 1)**. You should wash your hands:
 - ✓ after coughing or sneezing
 - ✓ before after you prepare food
 - ✓ before eating
 - ✓ after using the toilet
 - ✓ when caring for the sick
 - ✓ when hands are visibly dirty
 - ✓ after handling animals or animal waste
- Wash your hands with soap and running water when hands are visibly dirty (Figure 1).
- **Respiratory hygiene (Figure 2)**: Cover your mouth and nose with a clean tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and then promptly dispose of the tissue in a bin. If you do not have a clean tissue, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow instead. Wash your hands immediately after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing signs of respiratory illness such as coughing or sneezing.
- **Cleaning and disinfection of the environment**:
Clean surfaces, especially the most frequently touched surfaces, with any cleaning product, then disinfect with a **disinfectant**.
- **Waste disposal**:
Dispose of household waste as you normally would. Used tissues can be disposed of in your normal household bin.

Figure 1: How to Handwash

How to Handwash?

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

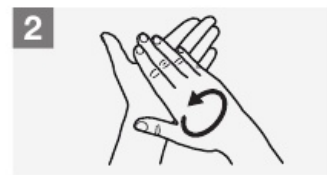
 Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds



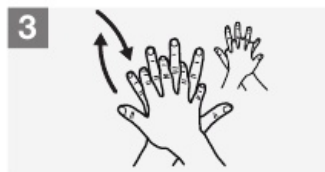
0 Wet hands with water;



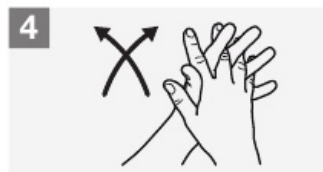
1 Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



2 Rub hands palm to palm;



3 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



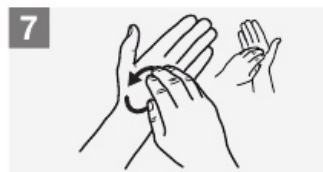
4 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



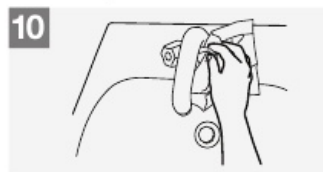
7 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



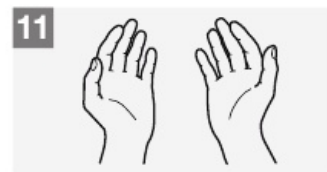
8 Rinse hands with water;



9 Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



10 Use towel to turn off faucet;



11 Your hands are now safe.



World Health
Organization

Patient Safety

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

SAVE LIVES
Clean Your Hands

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WHO acknowledges the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), in particular the members of the Infection Control Programme, for their active participation in developing this material.

May 2009

Figure 2: Respiratory Hygiene

COVER UP

COUGHING AND SNEEZING

- • Turn your head away from others
• Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth
- • Drop your tissue into a waste bin
- • No tissues? Use your sleeve
- • Clean your hands after discarding tissue using soap and water or alcohol gel for at least 15 seconds



These steps will help prevent the spread of colds, flu and other respiratory infections