

Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

You, Your Community and COVID-19

Information on Community Support

Department of Rural and Community Development



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Coming together as a Community

The National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) is leading our public health response to COVID-19. As part of the Government's co-ordinated response, a National Action Plan was published on 16th March. This Plan sets out a whole-of-society response and the mobilisation of resources across Government and society to fight the spread of this virus.

The COVID-19 outbreak is a challenge for individuals and communities across Ireland. In these exceptional circumstances, all community members have a role to play in helping those who need extra support.

Standard supports offered by the government and volunteer groups may become temporarily unavailable during the COVID-19 outbreak. Communities need to come together and use their people power to fill any gaps in the services vulnerable people rely on.

Vulnerable Neighbours

Are some of your neighbours particularly vulnerable? This may include older people and people with disabilities, underlying illnesses or mobility problems.

Neighbourhood Supports

Do you have your neighbours' contact details? How can you help each other? For example, can you go shopping on behalf of neighbours who are unable to go themselves?

What can you do to help?

Consider your neighbours and relatives who are older, who have underlying illnesses, disabilities or impaired mobility, or who may be vulnerable in other ways during this period.

- Do you have their phone number(s)?
- Phone them or call around if it is safe to do so — please keep in mind the HSE's physical distancing advice.
- Make sure they have enough fuel, food supplies and necessary medications.
- If in doubt, call the Gardaí and ask them to check. They have extra resources to help those who are most in need, particularly those with limited local family or social support. Contact details for all Garda stations can be found on the Garda website address – www.garda.ie – or in any phonebook.



Volunteering to help others

If you can help those who need support in your community, please contact your local Volunteer Centre or Volunteer Information Service. Contact details are available on www.volunteer.ie. You do not need any healthcare experience to be a volunteer — there are many non-health roles to fill, such as shopping or collecting prescriptions for people with limited mobility. **Please note that volunteers may require Garda vetting before taking up their roles.**

DOS and DON'TS

For volunteer centres and volunteers:

DO

-  Follow the latest HSE guidance on hand washing, sneezing/coughing and physical distancing.
-  Make sure that any organisations you are volunteering with have proper procedures and safeguards in place to protect you, including a named supervisor.
-  Bear in mind that a vulnerable person might not want/need your offer of help at this time, and don't be disheartened.
-  Clean any objects that you may be delivering to people's homes.
-  Wash your hands when you arrive at and leave buildings, including people's homes.

DON'T

-  Volunteer if you are at risk from COVID-19 or if you have any of the symptoms.
-  Phone a vulnerable person or call to their door unannounced. This could cause undue stress and worry. Consider dropping a note through the letterbox with your name and phone number, or make contact through someone the person already knows and trusts.
-  Enter someone's home unless absolutely necessary. If you are dropping off shopping or a prescription for someone, simply call and let them know that you are at the door. Please follow the physical distancing guidelines.
-  Hug or shake hands with vulnerable members of your community.
-  Share objects that touch the mouth, such as bottles or cups.
-  Spread rumours from sources such as social media, as they may not be correct.



For people receiving assistance:

DO

-  Follow the latest HSE guidance on hand washing, sneezing/coughing and physical distancing.
-  Clean any object that volunteers or others deliver to your home, if possible.

DON'T

-  Hug or shake hands with people who are visiting you.
-  Share objects that touch the mouth, such as bottles or cups.
-  Answer the door to someone you don't know unless you feel comfortable doing so. If someone calls to the door from an organisation, ask to see identification. Call the organisation to check their details if you need to.
-  Let someone into your house unless you know them or it is absolutely necessary.
-  Give cash, your bank details or your credit/debit card to anyone you don't trust.

Where Can I find information?

Do not seek information on social media.

If you need help or have concerns or questions, please turn to reliable sources of information:

-  The HSE website is the key source for health advice: www.hse.ie/coronavirus. It also includes posters and other resources that can be used in your community.
-  Reliable, up-to-date information on COVID-19 is also available from the following sources on **Twitter**:

HSE Ireland	@HSELive
HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)	@hpscireland
Department of Health	@roinnslaite
Dr Tony Holohan (Chief Medical Officer)	@CMOIreland

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These helplines are available for older people who may have questions or concerns:

Alone Helpline	0818 222 024
Senior Line	1800 804 591

Call 112 or 999 in a medical emergency when someone is:

-  Seriously ill
-  Injured
-  At risk of dying

Please keep a note of your Eircode and the Eircode of anyone you are helping. This will help emergency services and others find you more quickly.

HSE Advice

The HSE is constantly updating its advice as the situation changes. Please keep up to date with the latest official information.

Protecting yourself and others

COVID-19 is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. To infect you, it has to get from an infected person's nose or mouth into your eyes, nose or mouth. This can be direct or indirect (on hands, objects, surfaces). This means there are three key ways to prevent the spread of the virus: physical distancing, good cough etiquette and washing your hands correctly.



Physical distancing

Maintain a distance of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and others. Avoid crowded places and reduce the number of people you meet every day.



Good cough etiquette

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze. Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.



Wash your hands correctly

Use soap and water or alcohol hand rub to clean your hands regularly. Make sure to rub the top of your hands, between your fingers and under your fingernails, and to dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.

**Please make a note of the following vital phone numbers.
You never know when you may need them:**

Your local GP	
Your nearest hospital	
Your local Garda station	
Pharmacies in your area	
Your local Volunteer Centre or Volunteer Information Service	
Your local community centre	
Your residents' association/community alert group	
Your neighbours	