

# Information for Close Contacts who are able to Hybrid Isolate

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This information is being provided to you because you have been identified as having had close contact with someone who has been confirmed as having COVID-19 (novel coronavirus).

There is a possibility that the illness could have been passed on to you. It is possible for people who have had close contact with someone confirmed as having COVID-19 to not be infected or become ill, however as new virulent variants of the virus emerge it is necessary to air on the side of caution.

This fact sheet explains what you can expect from the GHA contact tracing team and provides some basic information on COVID-19 and precautions you can take to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

## About close contact

A 'close contact' is defined as any person with the following exposure to someone with COVID-19 during the time that they are infectious:

- 10 minutes or more of face-to-face contact within 2 meters; or
- Having had physical contact or direct contact with infectious secretions (e.g. being coughed on); or
- In a shared enclosed space (such as a household or classroom) for 10 minutes or more; or
- In an aircraft, sitting within three seats (in any direction) excluding aisle seat; or
- A healthcare worker or other person providing care to a case, or laboratory workers handling specimens from a case, without the recommended PPE.

## About COVID-19

COVID-19 is caused by a virus (more specifically, a coronavirus) that affects the respiratory system (lungs and breathing tubes).

## Symptoms

People confirmed to have COVID-19 may experience these symptoms:

- Headaches
- Itchy eyes
- Congestion
- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature (above 38 degrees C)
- A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)
- Shortness of breath
- A sore throat

Infections with mild symptoms (such as cold-like or hay-fever like symptoms) or no symptoms at all are likely; however mild you feel the symptoms are they should be considered an indication of infection and be reported to 111.

## How serious is it?

We think there are many people with mild or moderate symptoms, but some people can become seriously ill and require treatment in hospital. Those most at risk of becoming seriously unwell are those with weakened immune systems, older people and those with pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

## How it spreads

Understanding of the virus and the disease it causes continues to evolve. COVID-19 can be spread through person-to-person contact. The virus is thought to spread through touching infected surfaces and from an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as through coughing. However, the precise ways the virus spreads are not currently well understood.

Not everyone who has had close contact with someone confirmed as having COVID-19 has been infected or become ill.

## What you need to do (Hybrid Isolation)

Those identified as close contacts that have been doubly vaccinated, for more than 14 days following their second dose, may be able to break isolation for specific reasons (hybrid isolation).

Those who are unvaccinated that have had COVID-19 in the last 6 months, or 3 months if a healthcare professional, may also be considered for hybrid isolation.

You may:

1. Attend work, with the stipulation that a mask MUST be worn at all times and follow other PH guidance e.g. social distancing, adequate ventilation, taking breaks on your own etc.
2. Shop for essentials whilst wearing a mask at ALL TIMES
3. Only travel between home and the places mentioned above,
4. Exercise, but this must be alone and in an outdoor setting.

If you develop symptoms of Covid-19:

- Call 111 immediately and inform your advisor when they call you.
- For medical emergencies call 190.
- If you are resident in Spain, you should call 900400061 if you have symptoms of Covid-19 or 955545060 for other coronavirus related information.

## Self-isolation

You must do the following:

- Not socialise or mix with others at any time (do not have social visitors such as family and friends come to your home)
- Not use public transport such as a bus, plane or train
- Not share a vehicle with anyone outside their household
- Not eat out or drink in bars, restaurants, even if the tables are outside
- Not indulge in team sports or use gyms
- Avoid contact with other household members as much as possible:
  - Keep communal areas well ventilated, use a separate bathroom where possible. Avoid using shared facilities while others are present, disinfect touched surfaces and objects such as door knobs after use. Do not share utensils, cups and towels, including hand towels and tea towels.
  - Wash your hands often: Use soap and water for 20 seconds or hand sanitiser.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes: Use a disposable tissue or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
  - Consider using a face covering in shared parts of your home.

## During your isolation period

You will be provided with a date and time to attend for a swab on days 5 and 10.

If your tests are negative on day 5 you will continue with your hybrid isolation as stipulated.

If your test is negative on day 10 you will be released from isolation.

The only change to this swabbing schedule will be if you develop symptoms of Covid-19 during your isolation, and testing will be advised immediately; call 111 for guidance.

### **Carers:**

- If you or a family member receive essential care in your home, then carers should continue to visit. Carers should follow the relevant [guidance](#) to reduce the risk of you passing on the infection.

### **Routine medical care:**

- All routine medical and dental appointments should usually be cancelled while you and the family are staying at home. If you are concerned or have been asked to attend in person within the period you are home isolating, discuss this with your medical contact first (for example, your GP or dentist, local hospital or outpatient service).
- To speak to GP services, call 20052441 or ring 111.

### **Work:**

- If you have been advised by your line manager to remain at home you may email [covidsicknote@gha.gi](mailto:covidsicknote@gha.gi) with your name, Date of Birth, statement explaining that you have been told to isolate and your employers email address. The sick note will be sent to your employer.

### **Mental health:**

- We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.
- It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the Every Mind Matters website.
- You can call 111 to discuss mental health concerns.
- Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have stayed at home for a week or more have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films. If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home.