

Update on Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

March 16th 2020

The worldwide Covid-19 or Coronavirus outbreak is a rapidly changing situation. This information is correct as of 16th March 2020, and will be updated if the advice or situation changes.

Background

Covid-19 is a coronavirus, part of a large family of viruses that cause a range of illness in humans, from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The first case of a new Coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported on the 31 December 2019 in Wuhan in the Hubei Province of China. The initial outbreak in China has now spread to many other countries around the world, including the UK.

Current situation

The outbreak of Covid-19 was declared a pandemic on 12th March, and is now in most countries across the world, with numbers still rapidly increasing. The risk to individuals is high. On 16th March there were 153,648 confirmed cases, with 5,746 deaths in 146 countries. The reality is that testing is not available for everyone with symptoms in most countries and so the actual number of people infected will be much higher.

The current situation is deteriorating, with many governments and countries putting in measures to control the spread of the virus. These measures vary depending on where you are, so please see your local government website for more information.

Our Thrive recommendation is to minimise travel to all but essential travel, and for people to work at home wherever possible, and to maintain contact using telephone or video conferencing technology.

We have advice sheets about minimising the psychological impact of isolation, and how to work virtually.

We are available to provide tailored advice to individuals and organisations. Please contact us if you would like more advice by emailing:

info@thrive-worldwide.org.

What are the symptoms of Covid-19?

Most people will experience mild symptoms, with 1 in 6 people experiencing severe symptoms. The risk is higher for older people, or those with pre-existing illnesses, particularly diseases affecting the lungs and heart.

Common symptoms include

- Fever (over 38C)
- New, continuous, dry cough
- Shortness of breath and sputum production
- Weakness and malaise
- Muscle and joint aches

Symptoms can be similar to the common cold or flu.

How can someone catch Covid-19?

The incubation period is up to 14 days: this means that it can take someone up to 2 weeks to develop symptoms having been exposed to the virus. It is thought that transmission is via droplets from coughing and sneezing, and also from environmental contact, i.e. touching surfaces touched by an infected person. A vaccine is not currently available.

How can I protect myself from Covid-19?

The best way to prevent the virus spreading is by avoiding contact with individuals with the infection, and also by maintaining good hygiene practices. The Department of Health (UK) and the World Health Organisation have issued the following guidance:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport, or being in public places.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

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- If you feel unwell, stay at home, do not go to work. Current advice in the UK for anyone who has symptoms is to self-isolate for 7 days (stay at home, and minimise contact with other people.)
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.

What treatment is available?

- A vaccine is not currently available.
- Treatment is supportive and aims to relieve the symptoms while your body fights the illness.
- Antibiotics will not help as they do not work against viruses.
- You will need to self-isolate away from other people for 7 days

Travel advice

There are now travel restrictions to and from many countries, with reduced flights and quarantine periods in many places. Most organisations and countries are suggesting that travel should be only in an emergency. If you need to travel, then up to date travel advice in the UK can be found on the FCO website. For other countries, please see your government's advice about travel.

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

We recommend that you do not travel unless it is absolutely essential. We are happy to provide specific advice for individual situations, but cannot provide general advice, as now the situation is complex and fast changing.

Further advice and information:

- Fit for travel - <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home>
- Travel Health Pro - <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/news/498/covid-19-update>

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- WHO – <https://www.who.int/>
- FCO - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/china>
- PHE - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>
- NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Compiled by Alison Coulter and Jo Thompson with information from WHO, FCO, Travel health pro, NHS and PHE.

16 March 2020

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