**Protect Yourself and Others**

To protect yourself and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) it’s important to think about how the virus is spread.

Coronavirus 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). Keep this in mind. It will help you remember all the things you need to do to protect yourself and others from the virus.

**Social distancing**

Social distancing is important to help slow the spread of coronavirus. It does this by minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals.

Social distancing is keeping a space of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and other people. Do not shake hands or make close contact if possible.

**Help slow the spread of coronavirus**

To help slow the spread of coronavirus:

* anyone who has symptoms should self-isolate for 14 days
* everyone should limit unnecessary social contact as much as possible
* [at-risk groups](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html) should avoid close contact with people outside the home

**How to protect yourself and others from coronavirus**

Follow this advice as strictly as possible and encourage others to follow this advice too.

**Do**

[Wash your hands properly and often](https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html).

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.

Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Avoid close contact with people - keep a distance of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and others.

Avoid crowded places, especially indoors.

[Follow the travel advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs](https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/).

Stay at home if you are sick to help stop the spread of whatever infection you may have.

**Don't**

Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

Do not share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups.

Do not shake hands.

**Wash your hands properly and often**

You should wash your hands:

* after coughing or sneezing
* before and after eating
* before and after preparing food
* if you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
* before and after being on public transport or in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
* when you arrive and leave buildings including your home or anyone else's home
* if you have handled animals or animal waste
* before having a cigarette or vaping
* if your hands are dirty
* after toilet use

Keep your hands in good condition, moisturise them often. Any basic product that is not perfumed or coloured is OK.

Do not wear gloves instead of washing your hands. The virus gets on them in the same way it gets on your hands. Also, your hands can get contaminated when you take them off.

Read a [step-by-step guide on how to properly wash your hands and avoid infection](https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html).

**Face masks**

Using masks is unlikely to be of any benefit if you are not sick.

Sick people will be advised by their doctor when to use a mask. Healthcare workers need masks and other personal protective equipment to protect them from infection during their work.