



**Public Health Information about COVID-19**  
**For all Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Nurses and Clinical Dental Technicians**

**For up to date information on Covid-19, log on to [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats, with some causing illness in humans e.g. SARS (civet cats) and MERS (dromedary camels). Rarely, animal coronaviruses can change and infect people and then spread between people such as has been seen with MERS and SARS.

**Common Signs of Infection**

- respiratory symptoms i.e. cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties
- fever
- in more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

**Where can I get further information?**

<http://www.hpsc.ie/>

There are several resources, guidance, posters and FAQs that you can use on the HPSC website so take a look there for general information. These can be printed off and used in any clinic/surgery as they are generic for any healthcare setting.

**Clinical Guidance**

**What should I do if a symptomatic person arrives or makes contact?**

- The primary care algorithm (attached) is the best approach for you if a symptomatic person arrives in your surgery or makes contact with you. It would be the same steps to be followed as in any community clinical setting.

**What should I do if someone has been in an affected area recently?**

- If a well person who attends a clinic has returned from mainland China in the previous 14 days, it would be prudent to defer the appointment until at least 14 days after last exposure in mainland China.
- In general, a generic travel question for everyone on the consultation form is always a useful, e.g. *Have you travelled abroad in the last month? If yes where?* This would help gather this information without singling out any particular group or individual.

**Infection Control and Waste Management**

- The IPC guidance and waste management would also be useful for your services as this would also apply for your setting and can be used accordingly  
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/>

**Recommendations to prevent spread of infection include:**

- regular hand washing,
- covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing,
- avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness
- avoid visiting wet or live markets and contact with animals, excretions and droppings
- thoroughly cooking meat and eggs.
- If you are unwell on return from travel to an affected area, contact your healthcare provider and tell them of recent travel.



# COVID-19 (2019-nCoV): Risk Assessment for patients presenting to general practice and healthcare settings other than receiving hospitals



**1 CLOSE CONTACTS:**  
Any individual who has had greater than 15 minutes face-to-face (<2 metres\* distance) contact with a laboratory confirmed case, in any setting.  
Click [here](#) for further details on the definition of close contacts.

\*A distance of 1 metre is generally regarded as sufficient to minimise direct exposure to droplets however, for Public Health purposes, a close contact definition of 2 metres has been specified.

**Interim Case Definition**  
In the 14 days before the onset of illness:  
Been in mainland China excluding Hong Kong and Macau  
OR  
Contact<sup>1</sup> with a case of COVID-19  
OR  
Worked in or attended a healthcare facility where patients with COVID-19 were being treated  
**AND**  
**CLINICAL CRITERIA**

- severe acute respiratory infection requiring admission to hospital with clinical or radiological evidence of pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome  
OR
- acute respiratory infection of any degree of severity (including at least one of the following:  
fever, shortness of breath or cough)  
OR  
Fever of unknown cause with no other symptoms

Clinicians should be alert to the possibility of atypical presentations in patients who are immunocompromised.

**STANDARD PRECAUTIONS (SP)**

**Maintain at least 1 METRE DISTANCE**

**CONTACT & DROPLET PRECAUTIONS:**

- Gloves
- Long-sleeved gown, if available, if not, then use plastic apron and roll up sleeves
- Eye protection (face shield or goggles)
- Respiratory protection (surgical face mask)
- Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette



COVID-19 UNLIKELY  
Proceed as clinically indicated

1. ISOLATE patient away from other patients ([Advice for GPs](#))
2. Initiate **STANDARD CONTACT & DROPLET PRECAUTIONS**
3. Provide the patient with a **SURGICAL MASK** if tolerated
4. Explain the **NOW and the NEXT to the patient**

1. Phone PUBLIC HEALTH to DISCUSS details of the possible case
2. If the patient fits the CASE DEFINITION:
  - You should **ALERT NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE (NAS)** of a possible case of COVID-19 for transfer of the patient
  - NAS will **contact** the **RECEIVING HOSPITAL**, who will alert ED/admitting team and IPC team **in advance**
  - Discard waste and decontaminate environment as [per IPC guidelines](#)
  - Record details of all persons in the waiting room and practice team members who may have had potential exposure

If the patient PHONES

1. You should contact **PUBLIC HEALTH** to **DISCUSS** details of the possible case
2. If the patient fits the CASE DEFINITION:
  - a. You should **ALERT NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE (NAS)** of a possible case of COVID-19 for transfer of the patient.
  - b. NAS will **contact** the **RECEIVING HOSPITAL**, who will alert ED/admitting team and IPC team **in advance**

**CONTACT DETAILS:**  
PUBLIC HEALTH Medical Officer Health (MoH): (OOH 0818 501999)

HSE E: 01 635 2145  
HSE M: 057 935 9891  
HSE MW: 061 483 338  
HSE NE: 046 907 6412  
HSE NW: 071 985 2900  
HSE SE: 056 778 4142  
HSE S: 021 492 7601  
HSE W: 091 775 200

NAS: as per usual channels—  
(0818 501999)