

Protecting yourself from coronavirus

Guide to social distancing

Social distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people. Social distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread by close contact with an infected person, or by contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.

So, the more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

What should I do?

- If you are sick, stay at home. If children are sick, do not send them to school. These are the most important steps you can take.
- Minimise physical contact, such as shaking hands and kissing to greet others.
- Keep two steps away (more than 1.5 metres) from others when you are out in public.
- Unless essential, avoid places and gatherings with many people.
- Consider using online services where possible (e.g. pay bills online).
- At work, hold large meetings via video conferencing, phone call or in the open air if possible.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water and dry them.
- Use a tissue (or in the inside of your elbow) to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Be sure to put the tissue in the rubbish bin straight after use.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as desks, benches, light switches and door handles regularly.

At home

- Increase ventilation in the home by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning.
- Visit shops sparingly and buy goods and services online where possible.
- Care for sick people in a single room if possible. Keep the sick person's door closed and open the window.
- Protect those at risk of severe illness, including people over 60 years and those with a serious underlying illness, e.g. heart disease, lung disease, cancer, diabetes, renal failure.

In the workplace

- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Defer large meetings or use phone and video conferencing for essential meetings.
- Avoid crowded lunchrooms.
- Consider opening windows and adjusting air conditioning for more ventilation.
- Reconsider non-essential business travel.
- Promote strictest hygiene among food preparation (canteen) staff and their close contacts.

Flatten the curve

Collective action can limit the rise of new COVID-19 infections and help hospitals manage increased demand for care. See diagram below explaining why it's important we all do our bit to try to flatten the curve.

