

Covid-19, patient information

Infectious diseases leaflet

Why have I received this information?

You have tested positive for Covid-19, which is an infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

What is Covid-19?

Covid-19 is a viral infection that usually causes mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, cough and high temperature, but some people become more seriously ill with breathing problems and then need hospital care. Other symptoms that Covid-19 can cause are muscle aches, headaches, tiredness, an impaired sense of smell and/or taste, and stomach complaints leading to diarrhoea.

How is Covid-19 transmitted?

Covid-19 is primarily transmitted through droplets from the airways being passed from one person to another. Small droplets are spread when an infected person sneezes, coughs, speaks or exhales. The infection can enter the body when you breathe in, or if your unclean hands touch your eyes or the inside of your nose or mouth.

A person with Covid-19 can infect others even before they develop any symptoms. The time from infection to illness (incubation period) varies between 2 and 14 days, but is usually 3 to 4 days.

How long will I risk infecting others?

The time a person risks infecting others varies. Those who are seriously ill are usually contagious slightly longer than those who are only mildly ill.

- You are considered to be contagious for at least 5 days from your onset of symptoms. If you have not generally improved and been fever free for the past 48 hours, you may be contagious for slightly longer than 5 days. You are no longer considered to be contagious if, after 5 days, you only have very mild symptoms such as a dry cough or problems with your sense of taste and smell. If you were tested even though you had no symptoms, the 5 days are counted from the day of the test.
- Exception from the above: If you **work in health or social care and have not received three doses of the vaccine**, you are considered to be contagious for 7 days from the day you became ill. If you were tested even though you had no symptoms, the 7 days are counted from the day of the test.
- If you **live in a care home for elderly people** or are **being treated in the hospital**, your doctor can give you information about how long you may be contagious. This also applies if you are severely immunocompromised.

What do I need to do to protect others from infection?

- As long as you are contagious, you are advised to stay home and avoid close contact with other people.
- You should inform your employer if you work in health and social care.

Contact tracing – what does that mean?

Contact tracing must be carried out in health and social care where there are people who risk becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. You must therefore participate in contact tracing, which involves finding and informing people within health and social care who may have been exposed to infection.

What should I do if I need medical care for COVID-19 or any other illness?

- Call 1177 if you need medical advice. You will be given help to assess your symptoms or where you can seek treatment.
- If you need medical care, it is essential that you call first and do not go directly to a clinic. This is to stop you from infecting others who may be there. When you call, you will be given instructions about what to do.
- If your condition becomes life-threatening, dial 112.