

## Coronavirus Awareness for Bishopsgate House Hotel Staff

This information is intended to give you an understanding of the virus and help us to reduce the spread.

It is important before returning to work you have read this document and the company risk assessment with the attached government guidelines on social distancing, and hand washing. Regardless of which department you work in you should also be aware of the hotel's COVID procedures.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/what-you-need-to-do/>

## What is the Coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that can affect your lungs and airways. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world.

But, as this is a new strain of the virus, we don't know exactly how it spreads from person to person, but similar viruses spread in cough droplets. It's highly unlikely that it spreads through packages from affected countries or through food.

Scientists are currently working hard to find out more about it, and our understanding of the virus is likely to change as new information becomes available.

## How do I reduce the risks of spreading Coronavirus?

There's currently no vaccine for this virus, but there are things you can do to help stop germs like the Coronavirus from spreading:

- First of all, the NHS advise that you cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve - not your hands - when you cough or sneeze, and then put any used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water – using hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- And avoid close contact with people who are unwell

They also tell you to not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean. There are also other things you can do to help prevent infections from spreading:

- Keep your fingernails short
- Don't wear wristwatches, bracelets, or rings (apart from plain bands) as they can harbour germs and also make handwashing less effective
- At work, you can wear personal protective equipment, such as disposable gloves, masks, aprons and oversleeves, when you handle anything that may be contaminated with pathogens
- Keep clothes and protective equipment clean by washing them regularly. Putting clothing on a hot wash, hot ironing them or tumble-drying them should kill any bacteria present
- Keep your work and home environment clean, especially frequently touched objects and surfaces such as phones, keyboards, door handles, light switches and tabletops
- Get rid of waste regularly, for example by picking up rubbish and emptying bins. Use foot-operated bins rather than lifting lids with your hands
- Take particular care to throw away used tissues, sanitary waste, and medical waste correctly and immediately—and remember to wash your hands afterwards!

- Bacteria can build up on cloths and re-used towels, so always use single-use disposable towels or hand-dryers if they're available, to avoid spreading bacteria

## The importance of handwashing

Keeping your hands clean is one of the important control methods for reducing the spread of infections but it is most effective if you follow the steps below:

To wash your hands:

1. Use clean, hot, running water and soap – preferably antibacterial liquid soap from a dispenser – as soap bars can harbour germs.
2. Wet your hands thoroughly.
3. Rub soap into your palms to form a lather.
4. Clean your hands for 20 to 30 seconds. Go between your right and left hand for each of these areas – the backs, between your fingers, your thumbs and your wrists. Remember to check and clean your fingernails too.
5. Then rinse the soap off with clean, hot, running water.
6. Turn the tap off with a disposable hand towel to avoid re-contaminating your hands.
7. Dry your hands thoroughly using a second disposable hand towel or a hand dryer. Make sure you dry your hands properly – it's easier for harmful bacteria to spread if your hands are wet or damp.

## Symptoms of Coronavirus

Generally, much like the flu, the Coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, such as older people and those with long-term health conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

The main symptoms of this virus are a cough, a high temperature and shortness of breath. If you experience any of these symptoms - even IF they're mild - you should not go to the doctors or the hospital because it could put others at risk. Instead, stay indoors for 7 days and avoid contact with others. You must **ask for a coronavirus test** if you have symptoms.

You can use the **NHS 111 Online Advisory Service** if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, if your condition gets worse, or if your symptoms do not get better after 7 days. Only call 111 if the online service is unavailable. You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you are staying at home.

If you live with other people, they should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms.

Do not leave your home if you have either:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

NHS

Visit the **NHS website** for the latest guidance.

# Treatment of Coronavirus

If there's a chance you could have Coronavirus, you should self isolate for 7 days.

If you live with other people, they should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms and received a positive test result. If they do not get symptoms while self-isolating - they can stop self-isolating after 14 days. However if they get Coronavirus symptoms they should self-isolate for 7 days from when their symptoms started, even if it means they are self-isolating for longer than 14 days.

If you share your home with others, try to keep away from each other as much as possible.

The NHS state that if you display symptoms of Coronavirus you should:

- not leave your home for any reason – if you need food or medicine, order them by phone or online, or ask someone else to drop them off at your home
- You can use your garden, if you have one. Any exercise should be taken at home.

There is no specific treatment for the Coronavirus at the moment, but specialists offer treatment that aims to relieve the symptoms while the body fights the infection.

You can use the [111 online coronavirus service](#) for further guidance.

## Will I catch Coronavirus?

Just bear in mind, even though it seems frightening at the moment, 80% of coronavirus cases are mild. Coronaviruses as a group commonly come in mild forms - much like the common cold. None the less, it is important to follow the advice above so you can help to reduce the possible spread of infection. It's important to note that not everyone who comes into contact with a pathogen will become infected, and not everyone who becomes infected will experience the same severity of illness.

People should also continue to follow public health advice – wash your hands, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and put used tissues in the bin immediately.

- Professor Keith Willett, NHS strategic incident director for Coronavirus

## How is it being handled in the UK?

In the UK, England's chief medical officer told the BBC that 'We basically have a strategy which depends upon four tactical aims: the first one is to contain; the second of these is to delay; the third of these is to do the science and the research; and the fourth is to mitigate so we can brace the NHS'.

The overall phases of our plan to respond to COVID-19 are:

- Contain: detect early cases, follow up close contacts, and prevent the disease taking hold in this country for as long as is reasonably possible
- Delay: slow the spread in this country, if it does take hold, lowering the peak impact and pushing it away from the winter season
- Research: better understand the virus and the actions that will lessen its effect on the UK population; innovate responses including diagnostics, drugs and vaccines; use the evidence to inform the development of the most effective models of care
- Mitigate: provide the best care possible for people who become ill, support hospitals to maintain

essential services and ensure ongoing support for people ill in the community to minimise the overall impact of the disease on society, public services and on the economy.

Coronavirus action plan: a guide to what you can expect across the UK, gov.uk

There are specialist NHS infection centres that are equipped to deal with Coronavirus cases and they have accommodated people returning from at-risk areas, such as the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan. The unit in Newcastle has already successfully treated and discharged patients who tested positive for Coronavirus.

Containment and isolation of Coronavirus is key to minimising its effects, so we can all play a part in making sure we know the up to date guidelines surrounding the virus. Self-isolation is a big ask of people who need to continue their day-to-day lives but it is essential to limit the spread of Coronavirus.

The health secretary reinforced on BBC's Question Time that self isolation also involves isolating from your family members within your home as much as possible. Take precautions, wash hands, wipe down surfaces in kitchens and bathrooms as in principle it is difficult to totally avoid contact with others in your household. He also added that panic buying is unnecessary; the government is working with supermarkets so if people are self isolating they will get the supplies they need.

The government passed the **Health Protection (Coronavirus) regulations 2020** in February to give authorities the power to isolate individuals posing a threat of spreading the Coronavirus. The Prime minister also made the announcement on 4th March that people should not be penalised for doing the right thing of self isolation. Statutory sick pay rules will be relaxed to allow statutory sick pay from the first day you are sick and this is being discussed in parliament as part of the emergency Coronavirus legislation.

Furthermore a decision has been taken to begin testing for Coronavirus in patients experiencing a severe chest infection at a selected number of hospitals and GP surgeries around the country, even if they haven't been to one of the at-risk destinations. As it is thought that Coronavirus can spread from person to person, this additional step will enable the health service to stay ahead of the illness and continuing with the screening of possible cases will identify local areas that could be at risk.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson called a crisis meeting, which took place on Monday 2nd March 2020, and as a result published a **Coronavirus action plan**: a guide to what you can expect across the UK.

The government aim is to 'minimise the social and economic impact, subject to keeping people safe' and how this will be done will be based on the situation as it develops.

Further government meetings have now seen Britain move into the delay phase to try to stall the peak of the infection. On the 16th March it was announced that the government will provide a daily update so people are aware of the latest information on how to protect themselves and others from the Coronavirus.

With the guidance changing as the UK sees more cases of Coronavirus it becomes even more important to provide information to the public. Gov.uk provides guidance on managing the Coronavirus at home if you are showing symptoms. You can access it **here**. Those displaying mild symptoms will not require testing but should self-isolate.

A new campaign across radio, television and internet is reminding people with symptoms of the Coronavirus, even if mild, to stay at home in order to 'protect yourself, others and the NHS'.

On 23rd March, Prime Minister, Boris Johnson addressed the nation through national TV and asked them to stay home to stop the Coronavirus from spreading.

*'From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home.'*

*Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households.*

*That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:*

- *Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible*
- *One form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;*
- *Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and*
- *Travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.*

*That's all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home.'*

Whilst out, social distancing should be practiced which means staying 2 metres away from other people at all times. This may change and we will inform all staff should this happen.