

Coronavirus Information

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

It has now been classed as a pandemic.

Government advice is changing daily on precautions to take and it is important that everyone keeps up to date on these requirements.

Symptoms of coronavirus

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness though.

The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

How coronavirus is spread

Because it's a new illness, we do not know exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person.

Similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

It's very unlikely it can be spread through things like packages or food.

How to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus

Do:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Don't:

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

What to do if you think you might have coronavirus

If you think you might have coronavirus or you've been in close contact with someone who has it:

- stay at home and avoid close contact with other people
- do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
- use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do next

The 111 coronavirus service will tell you if you need to continue to stay at home (self-isolate) or if you need medical help.

Recent travel

If you've recently travelled abroad, see the NHS coronavirus advice for travellers to find out what to do.

Treatment for coronavirus

There is currently no specific treatment for coronavirus.

Antibiotics do not help, as they do not work against viruses.

Treatment aims to relieve the symptoms while your body fights the illness.

You'll need to stay in isolation away from other people until you've recovered. For further information see the following links:-

Government response and action plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

Government information on coronavirus

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

Advice on Safe Hand Washing Practices

Washing your hands is one of the easiest ways to protect yourself and others from illnesses such as food poisoning and flu virus.

If you do not have immediate access to soap and water then use alcohol-based hand gel if available.

When should you wash your hands?

You should wash your hands:

- after using the toilet or changing a nappy
- before and after handling raw foods like meat and vegetables
- before eating or handling food

- after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing
- before and after treating a cut or wound
- after touching animals, including pets, their food and after cleaning their cages

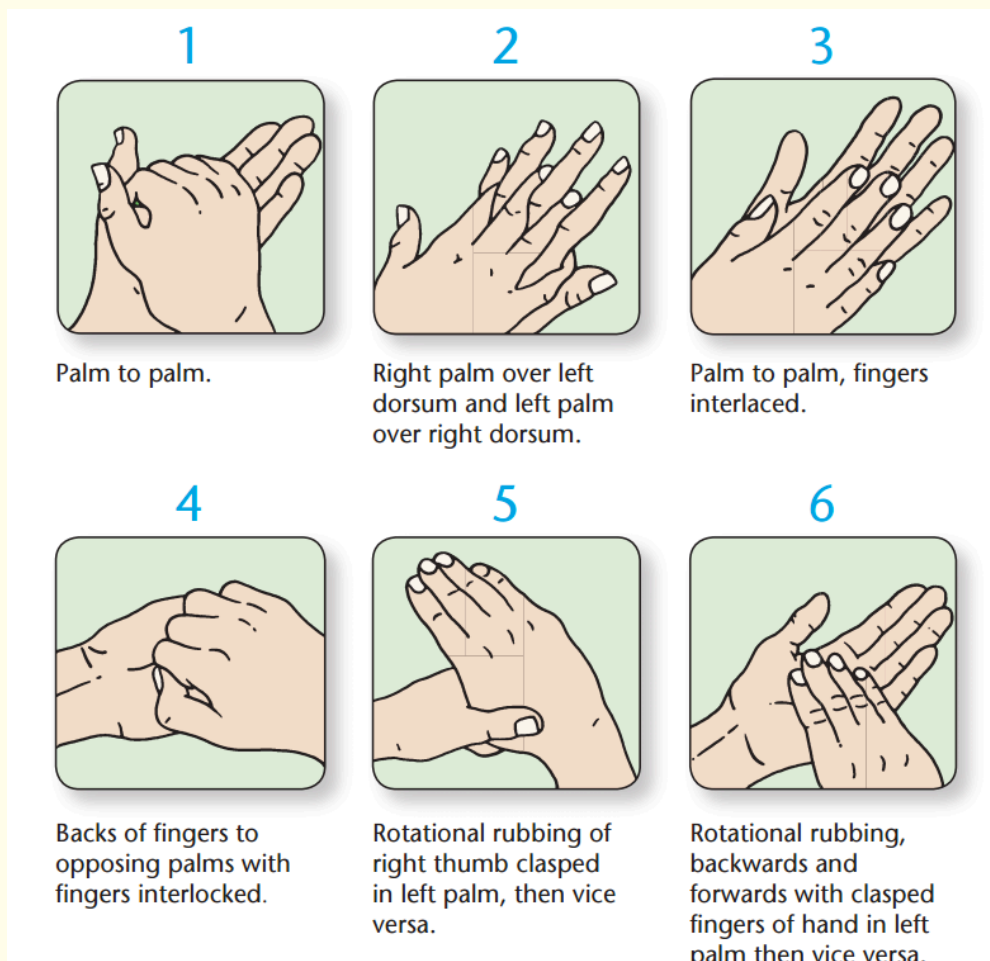
Washing your hands properly removes dirt, viruses and bacteria to stop them spreading to other people and objects, which can spread illnesses such as food poisoning, flu or diarrhoea.

It can help stop people picking up infections and spreading them to others.

It can also help stop spreading infections when you're visiting someone in hospital or another healthcare setting.

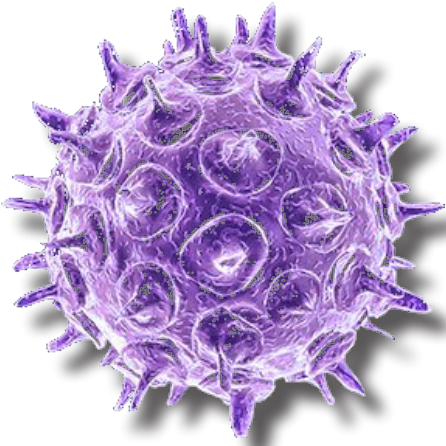
For a video demonstration of how to wash your hands go to:

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



Norovirus

About norovirus and how to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.



Norovirus is commonly known as the winter vomiting virus. It causes an estimated three million cases of diarrhoea and vomiting each year.

Although the symptoms of norovirus can be unpleasant, it is considered a mild infection. This is because it is usually short-lived and most people get better without medical treatment.

You are most likely to catch norovirus by coming into contact with an infected person but it can also be spread by contaminated food.

Norovirus is one of the most common causes of foodborne illness in the UK. Our research published in 2020 estimated that it was responsible for around 380,000 cases of food poisoning in the UK.

How norovirus spreads

Norovirus can contaminate food and water and enters the body by being ingested and inhaled through the mouth or nose. Norovirus causes infection once it has reached the gut.

It can remain infectious in the environment for several months.

To prevent you from passing norovirus on to your family and friends via the food you're preparing, it's vital that you follow good personal hygiene practices.

It's also essential that you are careful about cleaning and avoiding cross-contamination when transporting, preparing and storing food.

To stop norovirus spreading:

- . wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet and before preparing or eating food handle food carefully in your kitchen**
- . wash chopping boards and utensils**
- . clean surfaces properly**

Viruses such as norovirus cannot multiply in food, but they can survive there for long periods of time. Outbreaks of norovirus have been caused by food handlers, contaminated oysters and fresh produce such as berries and salad.

Fish / Shellfish

Eating fish or shellfish that is not fresh or that has not been stored and prepared hygienically can cause food poisoning.



Most of the shellfish we eat is cooked first, but oysters are often served raw.

Raw shellfish, particularly oysters, can contain low levels of certain viruses, such as norovirus. If you are serving oysters raw, be especially careful when buying and storing them.

Shellfish can also contain toxins. Depending on the type of toxin present, the symptoms from eating contaminated shellfish may include:

nausea ; vomiting; diarrhoea; headaches; numbness; breathing difficulties; memory loss; disorientation; abdominal pain.

These toxins do not break down during cooking.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises that older people, pregnant women, very young children and people who are unwell should avoid eating raw or lightly cooked shellfish to reduce their risk of getting food poisoning.

EU Exit Implications - The UK has left the EU.



If your business relates to food, your responsibility to make sure it is safe will continue to be requirement of law after 31 January 2020. This applies to issues of health and safety law as well. On that date, the UK left the EU and entered into a transition period until the end of 2020.

During the transition period, businesses will be able to trade with the EU on the same terms as before. There are no immediate changes that will come into effect before 1 January 2021 that you need to prepare for.

Current requirements include general food law; food labelling; health marks on meat, fish and dairy products; importing high-risk food and feed; novel foods.

The transition period

There is now a transition period until the end of 2020 whilst the UK and EU negotiate additional arrangements.

The current rules on trade, travel, and business for the UK and EU will continue to apply during the transition period. This includes rules on food and feed.

New rules will take effect on 1 January 2021.

EU food legislation

The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 provides that, from 1st January 2021, certain directly applicable EU legislation will be converted into UK law.

The Act provides powers to make corrections to retained EU law, so that it operates effectively as UK law. These corrections have been made by way of statutory instruments (SIs). All exit related statutory instruments are published on www.legislation.gov.uk and include 'EU Exit' in their title.

You should prepare now. Visit www.gov.uk/transition to find out about actions your business can take now to prepare for 2021.

FOCUS ON... Food Safety Training



Rother and Wealden Environmental Health Service provides training specifically for food handlers with courses currently available in Rother and Wealden's 2020 programme for Food Safety in Catering for Level 2 and 3 Awards.

It is a legal obligation for proper training and instruction to be given to food handlers to ensure that they have the correct knowledge to provide food that is safe to eat. Quality training and assessment can improve standards within the business and be an investment to develop the good reputation of your food business.

Training to suit your needs

To book a training course or if you would like more information about the training on offer and fees please take a look at our website:-

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/10457/Food-hygiene-and-safety-training>

or contact Paul Elphick at Rother District Council Environmental Health telephone 01424 787643 to make a booking.

FOCUS ON... Health and Safety



Registered charity fined after resident of care home fell down a set of stairs and was fatally injured

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Nazareth Care Charitable Trust failed to identify and implement adequate measures to control the risk of care home residents falling down the stairs. The stairwell involved in the incident was a flight of six steps, which descended from the main corridor in the care home on the ground floor down to the entrance of the boiler room. It was found to lack an effective physical barrier that prevented access to the stairwell, in an environment where many residents, due to their conditions and ailments, were at an increased risk of suffering a fall.

Nazareth Care Charitable Trust of East End Road, East Finchley, London pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £40,000.

Speaking after the hearing, Nikki Jack of HSE said: “This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures. Organisations should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards”.

New guidance on loneworkers

Protecting lone workers: How to manage the risks of working alone

This guidance explains how to keep lone workers healthy and safe. It is for anyone who employs lone workers, or engages them as contractors etc, including self-employed people or those who work alone.

Download a free copy from the HSE website at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm>

The Health and Safety Executive has published its Health and Safety at Work Summary Statistics for Great Britain 2019 including information on workplace injuries, enforcement, European comparison and cost to Britain. Take a look at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh1819.pdf>

Health and Safety Training

Health and Safety training and events on a wide range of key health and safety aspects is offered on the Health and Safety Executive's website. For more information on what's available go to:

www.hse.gov.uk/events/index.htm

