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Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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Public Health
England

Guidance

Glossary of terms

Updated 4 April 2020

Aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs)

Certain medical and patient care activities that can result in the release of airborne particles (aerosols). AGPs can create a risk of airborne transmission of infections that are usually only spread by droplet transmission.

Airborne transmission

The spread of infection from one person to another by airborne particles (aerosols) containing infectious agents.

Airborne particles

Very small particles that may contain infectious agents. They can remain in the air for long periods of time and can be carried over long distances by air currents. Airborne particles can be released when a person coughs or sneezes, and during aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). 'Droplet nuclei' are aerosols formed from the evaporation of larger droplet particles (see droplet transmission). Aerosols formed from droplet particles in this way behave as other aerosols.

Airborne precautions

Measures used to prevent and control infection spread without necessarily having close patient contact via aerosols (less than or equal to 5µm) from the respiratory tract of one individual directly onto a mucosal surface or conjunctivae of another individual. Aerosols can penetrate the respiratory system to the alveolar level.

BS/EN standards

Mandatory technical specifications created by either the British Standards Institute (BS) or European Standardisation Organisations (EN) in collaboration with government bodies, industry experts and trade associations. They aim to ensure the quality and safety of products, services and systems.

Cohort area

An area (room, bay, ward) in which 2 or more patients (a cohort) with the same confirmed infection are placed. A cohort area should be physically separate from other patients.

Contact precautions

Measures used to prevent and control infections that spread via direct contact with the patient or indirectly from the patient's immediate care environment (including care equipment). This is the most common route of infection transmission.

Contact transmission

Contact transmission is the most common route of transmission, and consists of two distinct types: direct contact and indirect contact. Direct transmission occurs when microorganisms are transmitted directly from an infectious individual to another individual without the involvement of another contaminated person or object (fomite). Indirect transmission occurs when microorganisms are transmitted from an infectious individual to another individual through a contaminated object or person (fomite) or person.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a highly infectious respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus. The disease was discovered in China in December 2019 and has since spread around the world.

Droplet precautions

Measures used to prevent and control infections spread over short distances (at least 1 metre or 3 feet) via droplets (greater than 5µm) from the respiratory tract of one individual directly onto a mucosal surface or conjunctivae of another individual. Droplets penetrate the respiratory system to above the alveolar level.

Droplet transmission

The spread of infection from one person to another by droplets containing infectious agents.

Eye or face protection

Worn when there is a risk from splashing of secretion (including respiratory secretions). Eye or face protection can be achieved by the use of any one of the following:

- a surgical mask with integrated visor
- a full face visor or shield
- polycarbonate safety spectacles or equivalent

Fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical face mask (FRSM)

A disposable fluid-resistant mask worn over the nose and mouth to protect the mucous membranes of the wearer's nose and mouth from splashes and infectious droplets. FRSMs can also be used to protect patients. When recommended for infection control purposes a 'surgical face mask' typically denotes a fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask.

Fluid-resistant

A term applied to fabrics that resist liquid penetration, often used interchangeably with 'fluid-repellent' when describing the properties of protective clothing or equipment.

Frequently touched surfaces

Surfaces of the environment which are commonly touched or come into contact with human hands.

Healthcare or clinical waste

Waste produced as a result of healthcare activities for example soiled dressings, sharps.

High-flow nasal cannula (HFNC) therapy

HFNC is an oxygen supply system capable of delivering up to 100% humidified and heated oxygen at a flow rate of up to 60 litres per minute.

Higher risk acute care area risk units

Intensive care units, intensive therapy units, high dependency units, emergency department resuscitation areas, wards with non-invasive ventilation; operating theatres; endoscopy units for upper Respiratory, ENT or upper GI endoscopy; and other clinical areas where AGPs are regularly performed.

Incubation period

The period between the infection of an individual by a pathogen and the manifestation of the illness or disease it causes.

Induction of sputum

Induction of sputum typically involves the administration of nebulised saline to moisten and loosen respiratory secretions (this may be accompanied by chest physiotherapy (percussion and vibration)) to induce forceful coughing.

Infectious linen

Linen that has been used by a patient who is known or suspected to be infectious and or linen that is contaminated with blood and or other body fluids, for example faeces.

Long term health condition

This covers:

- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchitis, emphysema or asthma
- heart disease
- kidney disease
- liver disease
- stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- diabetes
- lowered immunity as a result of disease or medical treatment, such as steroid medication or cancer treatment
- a neurological condition, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy, or a learning disability
- any problem with the spleen, including sickle cell disease, or had spleen removed
- a BMI of 40 or above (obese)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Equipment a person wears to protect themselves from risks to their health or safety, including exposure to infection agents. The level of PPE required depends on the:

- suspected or known infectious agent
- severity of the illness caused
- transmission route of the infectious agent
- procedure or task being undertaken

Respiratory droplets

A small droplet, such as a particle of moisture released from the mouth during coughing, sneezing, or speaking.

Respiratory protective equipment

Respiratory protection that is worn over the nose and mouth designed to protect the wearer from inhaling hazardous substances, including airborne particles (aerosols). There are 2 types of respiratory protection that can be used, tight-fitting disposable FFP respirators and loose-fitting powered hoods (TH2).

FFP stands for filtering face piece. There are three categories of FFP respirator: FFP1, FFP2 and FFP3. FFP3 and loose fitting powered hoods provide the highest level of protection and are recommended when caring for patients in areas where high risk aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are being performed. Where the risk assessment shows an FFP2 respirator is suitable, they are recommended as a safe alternative. N95 respirators are tested against different standards but are broadly equivalent to a FFP2.

Respiratory symptoms

Respiratory symptoms include:

- rhinorrhoea (runny nose)
- sore throat
- cough
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

Segregation

Physically separating or isolating from other people.

SARS-CoV

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, the virus responsible for the 2003 outbreak of human coronavirus disease.

SARS-CoV-2

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, the virus responsible for the 2019 outbreak of COVID-19 disease.

Standard infection control precautions (SICPs)

SICPs are the basic infection prevention and control measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of an infectious agent from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection.

Single room

A room with space for one patient and usually contains (as a minimum) a bed, a locker or wardrobe and a clinical wash-hand basin.

Staff cohorting

When staff care for one specific group of patients and do not move between different patient cohorts. Patient cohorts may include for example 'symptomatic', 'asymptomatic and exposed', or 'asymptomatic and unexposed' patient groups.

Transmission based precautions

Additional precautions to be used in addition to SICPs when caring for patients with a known or suspected infection or colonisation.

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