

Information Sheet A

WHAT IS AN OUTBREAK?

WHAT IS AN OUTBREAK?

An outbreak of an infectious disease is when there are more people with the disease than you might normally expect. The outbreak can be in a local area, or in a setting like a workplace or school. The criteria for declaring an outbreak can be slightly different depending on the setting.

WHAT IS A COVID-19 OUTBREAK?

A COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace is declared when there are two or more staff members testing positive within 14 days of each other. The staff members must either have been in close contact, or there must be nowhere else they could have become infected.

If the staff have not been in close contact, or they probably became infected outside of work, this is called a COVID-19 cluster.

WHY DOES AN OUTBREAK MATTER?

If the outbreak is not controlled, the number of people getting infected will increase very quickly. Although most people will only have a mild illness, some will have worse symptoms and may need hospital treatment. Having several members of staff off sick at the same time, will also have a very big impact on the business.

It is also possible that the outbreak could spread beyond the workplace into other settings or the wider community.

WHEN IS AN OUTBREAK OVER?

If 28 days pass without any new cases of COVID-19 in staff members, the outbreak is declared over. Clusters are finished after 14 days with no new cases.

Information Sheet B

THE CONTACT TRACING PROCESS

WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING?

This is the process of working out who has been exposed to an infected person. Anyone who has been exposed is at risk of developing the disease.

WHY IS CONTACT TRACING DONE?

By identifying contacts and asking them to isolate for 10 days, this can stop the disease being transmitted to others. If the contacts follow this advice, the outbreak can be stopped.

How are contacts identified?

Any person who has a positive COVID-19 test will be asked who they had close contact with since they became unwell, and in the 2 days before. Close contact includes:

- Being face to face with someone such as when talking
- Being less than 1m away for more than 1 minute
- Being less than 2m away for more than 15 minutes
- Being in an enclosed space like a car or van

The person testing positive will also be asked where they have been during that time.

This is when any workplace contacts will be identified.

Some of this contact tracing will be done by the NHS test and trace service. This involves a text, email or phone call to anyone with a positive test. Other contact tracing will be done locally, by the health protection team and local authority, with help from the workplace.

HOW WILL CONTACTS BE INFORMED?

The person testing positive will be asked for details of their contacts. These contacts will be informed by the NHS test and trace service that they have been exposed to a case of COVID-19 and need to self-isolate.

Workplace contacts will be informed by their employer.

Information Sheet C

STAY AT HOME AND SELF-ISOLATION

IF YOU HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH A CASE

You will be asked to stay at home for 10 days if you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

It can take up to 14 days to develop the disease if you have been infected. You can also pass on the disease up to 2 days before you start feeling unwell. By staying at home during this time, you are helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protecting your colleagues and community.

IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 OR TEST POSITIVE

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you must immediately self-isolate and book a test through <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> or calling 119. By staying away from other members of your household, you reduce the chance of them becoming unwell.

If your test is positive, you need to continue self-isolating for 10 days from when your symptoms started. After that, if you feel well and have no fever, you can return to work.

If your test is negative, you can stop self-isolating. However, if you have been in close contact with a positive case, you will still need to stay at home for the rest of the 10 days.

Information Sheet D

THE ROLE OF TESTING FOR COVID-19

TYPES OF TESTING

There are two main types of test:

1. Testing for the virus – this uses a nose and throat swab to pick up any virus. It is the kind of test available free through the NHS at a walk-through or drive-through testing centre. If you cannot get to a testing centre, you can arrange a home test.
2. Testing for antibodies – this is a blood test. It only tells you if you had the infection in the past. See Information Sheet F for more details.

WHAT DOES A POSITIVE VIRUS TEST MEAN?

A positive virus test means that you have COVID-19. You must self-isolate for 10 days from the first day of your symptoms. After that, if you feel well and don't have a fever, you can return to work.

WHAT DOES A NEGATIVE VIRUS TEST MEAN?

A negative virus test means that you did not have COVID-19 at the time of the test. It doesn't mean that you haven't picked up COVID-19. It can take up to 14 days for you to develop the infection after being in contact with an infected person.

WHY CAN'T I GET A TEST INSTEAD OF SELF-ISOLATING?

If you have been in contact with an infected person, it can take up to 14 days for you to develop COVID-19 yourself. This is the incubation period. The virus test can only tell if you have the actual disease, not if you are incubating it. So you may get a negative test one day, but then develop COVID-19 the next day.

REPEAT TESTING

There is no need for repeat testing before returning to work. Ten days after getting symptoms (or having a positive test), most people with COVID-19 are not able to pass the infection to others. So it is safe for them to return to work, as long as they feel well and have no fever. Some people can still show up as positive on a virus test after this time, even though they cannot infect others. Repeat testing would just keep these people away from work for no reason.

Information Sheet E

TEMPERATURE CHECKS AND THERMAL SCANNING

WHAT ARE TEMPERATURE CHECKS AND THERMAL SCANNING?

Temperature checks with no-contact thermometers are being used by some businesses in an attempt to identify people with COVID-19. Thermal scanners (cameras that detect body heat) are also being considered for the same purpose.

WHY ARE THEY USED?

One of the key symptoms of COVID-19 is a fever. Some people believe that by checking temperatures, most infectious people can be detected and kept out of the workplace.

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

Many people with COVID-19 do not have a fever, while some people can have fever that is not caused by an infection. So using temperature to detect COVID-19 is not very accurate. Thermal scanners in particular just pick up body surface temperature, and not true fever.

If people focus on fever, they might forget about the other important symptoms of:

- New continuous cough
- Loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Temperature checking might give people false reassurance. It is important that everyone continues to:

- Wash their hands often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Catch coughs and sneezes into a tissue, throw the tissue in a bin, and wash their hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces

Information Sheet F

ANTIBODY TESTING

WHAT ARE ANTIBODIES?

Antibodies are proteins produced by your body in response to an infection. They help your body to fight the infection, and are part of your immune response. The antibodies are unique to that infection, rather like a key fits only one lock.

WILL COVID-19 GIVE ME ANTIBODIES?

Yes. Research has shown that people can develop antibodies to the virus which causes COVID-19. The more severe your infection, the more antibodies you are likely to make. These can be detected with antibody tests.

I HAVE COVID-19 ANTIBODIES, SO I MUST BE IMMUNE?

Not necessarily. Having antibodies is just part of the picture. We don't yet know how effective these antibodies are, or how long they last.

SO WHAT DOES A POSITIVE COVID-19 ANTIBODY TEST MEAN?

A positive antibody test **DOES** mean:

- You have been exposed to COVID-19

A positive antibody test **DOES NOT** mean:

- You are immune to COVID-19
- You cannot infect others with COVID-19

Even if you have a positive antibody test, you will still need to:

- Self-isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms
- Stay at home for 10 days if you are in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19
- Follow the same Social Distancing as everyone else
- Continue good prevention practices such as handwashing

Antibody testing is not yet widely available.

Information Sheet G

HAND HYGIENE

WHY IS HAND HYGIENE IMPORTANT?

- The virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) is spread by droplets from the mouth and nose. These droplets spread when we breathe, talk, cough, sneeze etc.
- Most of the droplets fall quickly to the nearest surface. If another person touches this surface, and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes, they can become infected with COVID-19.
- So it is important to clean your hands regularly, and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Gloves are NOT a substitute for hand hygiene. The gloves will pick up virus if you touch a contaminated surface. You still need to avoid touching your face, and make sure you wash your hands when you remove your gloves.

SOAP AND WATER

- Use liquid soap and warm water. Dry with paper towels or hand driers.
- Ensure hand washing facilities are available in key areas e.g. toilets, changing rooms, canteen.
- Washing hands and forearms with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is essential at the following times:
 - On arrival at work
 - Before eating
 - After removing any PPE
 - Before and after smoking/vaping
 - After using the toilet
 - Before leaving work

ALCOHOL BASED HAND RUB

- Always undertake a risk assessment to ensure it is safe to use, store or carry these in your setting.
- Use on hands that are visibly clean.
- Alcohol based hand rubs are effective against enveloped viruses such as the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Use 60-80% or above alcohol-based hand rubs.

VISITORS

- Visitors need to clean their hands regularly too. Provide suitable facilities.
- Any visitors should wash their hands on arrival at the workplace, often during their visit, and upon leaving.

Information Sheet H

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

WHY IS RESPIRATORY HYGIENE IMPORTANT?

- The virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) is spread by droplets from the mouth and nose. These droplets spread when we breathe, talk, cough, sneeze etc.
- Most of the droplets fall quickly to the nearest surface. If another person touches this surface, and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes, they can become infected with COVID-19.
- So it is important to catch your coughs and sneezes so the infectious droplets cannot contaminate surfaces and spread to other people.

EXCELLENT RESPIRATORY HYGIENE MEANS:

- Catching coughs and sneezes in a disposable tissue. If you don't have a tissue, use the crook of your elbow.
- Single use, disposable tissues should be readily available and once used should be disposed of straight away in the nearest bin.
- Washing your hands using soap and water (if not available, use alcohol-based hand rub) after sneezing, coughing, using tissues or after any contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects.
- Hand hygiene facilities should be readily available with foot-operated waste bins.
- Keeping your hands away from eyes, mouth, nose and from the front of any face covering.

Information Sheet 1

SYMPTOMS

MAIN SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Recent onset of a new continuous cough, or
- A high temperature, or
- A loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If you have one or more of these symptoms, you must self-isolate at home for 10 days, and book a COVID-19 test at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>.

You can call NHS **119** on your telephone if you do not have internet access.

OTHER SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 can cause other symptoms including:

- Aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Diarrhoea
- Conjunctivitis (sore, red eyes)
- Headache
- A skin rash, or discolouration of fingers or toes

These symptoms are less common. You only need to be tested if you also have at least one of the main symptoms.

ASYMPTOMATIC INFECTIONS

Some people have COVID-19 so mildly, they don't experience any symptoms. This is described as 'asymptomatic infection'. Even if you don't have symptoms, you can still pass on the infection to others. So if you get a positive test but don't have symptoms, you must still self-isolate at home for 10 days from the date of your test.

HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

For many people, the symptoms will ease during the 10 days of self-isolation. However, the cough can continue for several weeks, and does not mean you are infectious. If you still have fever after 10 days, you must continue self-isolating until your temperature has returned to normal.

SEVERITY

For most people, COVID-19 is a mild illness. However, if you are aged over 70 years or have some types of underlying illness, you may have more serious illness. If you are struggling to cope with your symptoms at home, or you are getting worse, call NHS **111** for advice. In an emergency, call **999**.

Information Sheet J

SCREENS AND FACE COVERINGS

The virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) is spread by droplets from the mouth and nose. These droplets spread when we breathe, talk, cough, sneeze etc.

Most of these droplets quickly fall to the ground or other surfaces. Keeping a 2m distance from other people is the best way to minimise direct contact with respiratory droplets.

However, when a 2m distance cannot be maintained, physical barriers, such as face coverings, face shields and screens can reduce exposure to droplets.

SCREENS

Physical barriers, such as a clear plastic or acrylic screen, are the best way to protect staff from COVID-19 where a 2m distance is not possible. These screens prevent respiratory droplets passing from one person to another. If a physical barrier is in place, staff do not need face coverings.

FACE COVERINGS

A cloth face covering catches your respiratory droplets. It does not protect you, but may help protect people you come close to. You must wear your face covering properly, covering your mouth and nose. Don't touch the outside of your face covering. Wash your hands before putting your face covering on, and after taking it off.

You should only use face coverings in your workplace if wearing them does not affect compliance with food hygiene regulations, and if they are approved by your employer.

FACE SHIELDS

A face shield/visor provides a barrier against respiratory droplets between the wearer and any person closer than 2m. Visors need to fit properly and be worn properly. A visor must cover your forehead, extend below your chin, and wrap around the sides of your face. You don't need to wear a face covering if you are wearing a visor.

N.B. None of these measures remove the need for frequent hand washing, good respiratory hygiene, and enhanced surface cleaning

Information Sheet K

COHORTING

WHAT IS COHORTING?

Cohorting means keeping people together in fixed groups, so people only mix with others from their group. Each group is kept completely separate.

For staff who cannot work at 2m, cohorting can help to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If a worker develops COVID-19, it is likely that only their cohort members will count as close contacts and need to self-isolate for 10 days.

WHEN TO COHORT STAFF

Where it is not possible to restructure processes to allow 2m social distancing, keep the same workers together for:

- Shift work
- Sharing vehicles
- Travelling together to and from work in employer transport
- Shared accommodation provided by the employer