**Toolbox Talk - Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**What is Coronavirus?**

Coronavirus is a family of viruses known to cause a range of illnesses, from the common cold to the SARS-CoV outbreak in 2003. COVID-19 is a new strain of Coronavirus which had not previously been detected in humans. It mainly affects the lungs and airways.

**How is Coronavirus Spread?**

Coronavirus is mainly transmitted by large respiratory droplets and direct or indirect contact with infected secretions. This means that it is most likely to be transmitted through coughs and sneezes. If an infected person sneezes and another person comes into contact with these secretions, passing them onto their nose, mouth or eyes, this makes it possible for the virus to spread from person to person. This could be directly, through close contact, or indirectly, through people touching infected surfaces.

**What are the symptoms?**

The most common symptoms for Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

* A new, continuous cough – this means coughing regularly for a period of an hour or having 3 coughing episodes over 24 hours
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Fever - you will feel hot to the touch on your chest or back, you do not need to measure your temperature
* Anosmia - loss of, or change to, your sense of smell and/or taste

If you start to experience any of these symptoms you should self-isolate in your home for a period of at least 7 days. Anyone who lives with you should self-isolate for 14 days from the day your symptoms started, as it can take some time for symptoms to show. Some people can also contract COVID-19 and be asymptomatic, meaning that they do not experience symptoms but can still transmit the virus to others. You should also self-isolate if you have had contact with someone who has suspected or confirmed coronavirus.

People who are self-isolating and sharing a house should try to keep 2m apart from each other, sleep in different rooms where possible, use different cutlery, crockery, towels and household items and regularly clean and disinfect all surfaces.

**Do not** go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital if you are experiencing symptoms. You do not need to contact NHS 111 unless your symptoms become unmanageable and you need further support or medical assistance. In this case, your first step should be using the online NHS 111 service at [111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk). Here you can find out more information about the symptoms, when and where to get help and arrange to be contacted by a nurse if needed. If you experience serious problems breathing, call 999.

You can apply for a COVID-19 test by visiting [www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test)

**How can I protect myself and others from Coronavirus?**

**Personal Hygiene**

Observe good hand hygiene, washing your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If running water is not available, use hand sanitising gel with at least 60% alcohol content. Alcohol sanitising gel is only effective if your hands are not visibly dirty.

If you cough or sneeze, catch this in a tissue, dispose of it immediately and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes.

**Cleaning**

Regularly clean and sanitise all surfaces that you come into contact with using a two-step cleaning process. First clean with a detergent (such as washing up liquid) then use an appropriate disinfectant solution. Using disposable cloths and mops is recommended. Use gloves and adequate PPE when cleaning. Pay specific attention to high contact points such as door handles and light switches.

Do not share tools or equipment with other people, where possible. If you must use something that has been touched by someone else, it should be cleaned and sanitised before you use it.

Any PPE that is used should either be disposable or thoroughly cleaned after each use, with no sharing of PPE items between different people.

**Social distancing**

Aim to keep at least 2m from anyone else who does not live in your household. Where 2m is not possible you should keep a distance of at least 1m with extra precautions in place, such as wearing face coverings and not sitting face to face. If meeting people from other households, do this outside and follow the current government guidance on permitted number of people. You may meet with one other household at any time in any setting, e.g. outdoors or indoors. Social distancing should still be adhered to with thorough cleaning measures in place.

Wear a face covering when out in public places where social distancing is not always possible – for example when on public transport and in shops. A face covering reduces the chance that you will spread COVID-19 to other people if you have the virus and are asymptomatic or have not started to experience symptoms yet. If you are experiencing symptoms you should not leave your home for any reason and self-isolate for 7 days.

**Social distancing – in the workplace**

When travelling to work, avoid public transport and travel in a private vehicle, where possible. If you must use public transport, try and travel at less busy times and wear a face covering.

You should always keep 2m away from other workers, work should be adapted where possible to ensure this can be maintained. Where 2m social distancing is not possible, a distance of at least 1m with additional measures in place can be observed. For example, contact time and the amount of workers in contact with each other should be minimised. Appropriate PPE and screens should be provided to keep close contact to a minimum.

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| **Additional discussion notes:**  |
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