04 Health procedures

**4.5(a) Managing a suspected case of Coronavirus**

**The main symptoms of coronavirus are:**

* a high temperature
* a new continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
* a loss of change to smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Please refer to the latest government guidance on [next-steps-for-living-with-COVID](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-next-steps-for-living-with-covid#:~:text=From%201%20April%2C%20updated,have%20a%20high%20temperature). If it is suspected that a child has COVID, staff do not attempt to diagnose or make assumptions about symptoms presented. They should immediately respond and take action as detailed in this procedure. This includes asking parents/carers to seek further advice from a medical practitioner who may/or may not advise that the symptoms meet the criteria for testing. In which case if the child appears well and displays no further suspect symptoms, they can return to the setting within the timescale advised by the medical practitioner.

The focus on coronavirus must not detract from staff being alert to the signs and symptoms linked to other serious illness as detailed below:

**What to do if a child seems very unwell**

Children will still get illnesses that can make them very unwell quickly. It is important to get seek medical help and to contact the child’s parents immediately.

**Call 999 if a child:**

* has a stiff neck
* has a rash that does not fade when you press a glass against it
* is bothered by light
* has a seizure or fit for the first time
* has unusually cold hands
* has pale, blotchy, blue or grey skin
* has a weak, high-pitched cry that is not like their usual cry
* is extremely agitated (does not stop crying) or is confused
* finds it hard to breathe
* has a soft spot on their head that curves outwards
* is not responding like they normally do

**Being prepared**

* All staff are aware of this procedure and their responsibility if a child becomes unwell with coronavirus symptoms at the setting.
* Staff are instructed in how to remove and dispose of PPE equipment safely – this includes aprons and gloves worn during routine care procedures. We display the [NHS guide to putting on and removing PPE](https://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/content/uploads/2020/10/Correct-order-for-putting-on-and-removing-PPE-October-2020.pdf).

**If a child becomes unwell**

* If a child is displaying any of the symptoms of coronavirus. The manager/deputy calls their parents to collect them immediately. Current guidance states that: ‘*If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test. The risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower after 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature.* *Children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal’.*
* We will maintain contact with the parent(s) of the child who was sent home, and ensure they know that their child is entitled to a test and encourage them to get their child tested. To access testing parents should use the [111 online coronavirus service](https://111.nhs.uk/service/covid-19).
* We will ask the parent(s) to let us know the outcome as soon as possible.
* If the test result is positive we will inform all other parents that a child has tested positive and remind them to be aware of the symptoms to look out for.

**NHS guidlines**

**Symptoms of respiratory infections, including COVID-19**

Respiratory infections can spread easily between people. It is important to be aware of symptoms so you can take action to reduce the risk of spreading your infection to other people.

The symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections are very similar. It is not possible to tell if you have COVID-19, flu or another respiratory infection based on symptoms alone. Most people with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections will have a relatively mild illness, especially if they have been vaccinated.

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or you do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, you are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Symptoms of COVID-19, flu and common respiratory infections include:

* continuous cough
* high temperature, fever or chills
* loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell
* shortness of breath
* unexplained tiredness, lack of energy
* muscle aches or pains that are not due to exercise
* not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
* headache that is unusual or longer lasting than usual
* sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
* diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

If you are feeling unwell with these symptoms you should get plenty of rest and drink water to keep hydrated. You can use medications such as paracetamol to help with your symptoms. Antibiotics are not recommended for viral respiratory infections because they will not relieve your symptoms or speed up your recovery.

In some cases, you might continue to have a cough or feel tired after your other symptoms have improved, but this does not mean that you are still infectious.

You can find information about these symptoms on [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-tract-infection/).

If you are concerned about your symptoms, or they are worsening, seek medical advice by contacting NHS 111. In an emergency dial 999.

**What to do if you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, and have not taken a COVID-19 test**

**Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people**

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you no longer feel unwell.

It is particularly important to avoid close contact with anyone who you know is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell if they are infected with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, especially those whose [immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk).

Try to work from home if you can. If you are unable to work from home, talk to your employer about options available to you.

If you have been asked to attend a medical or dental appointment in person, contact your healthcare provider and let them know about your symptoms.

You may wish to ask friends, family or neighbours to get food and other essentials for you.

**If you leave your home**

If you leave your home while you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, and you have a high temperature or feel unwell, avoid close contact with anyone who you know is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell, especially those whose immune system means that they are at [higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk).

The following actions will reduce the chance of passing on your infection to others:

* wearing a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask
* avoiding crowded places such as public transport, large social gatherings, or anywhere that is enclosed or poorly ventilated
* taking any exercise outdoors in places where you will not have close contact with other people
* covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose and before you eat or handle food; avoid touching your face

**Reduce the spread of infection in your household**

While you are unwell there is a high risk of passing your infection to others in your household. These are [simple things you can do to help prevent the spread](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065735/AG232_Safe_at_home_infographic.pdf):

* try to keep your distance from people you live with
* in shared areas wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask, especially if you live with people whose [immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk)
* ventilate rooms you have been in by opening windows and leaving them open for at least 10 minutes after you have left the room
* wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
* regularly clean frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles and remote controls, and shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
* advise anyone that does need to come into your home that you have symptoms, so they can take precautions to protect themselves such as wearing a well-fitting face covering or a surgical face mask, keeping their distance if they can, and washing their hands regularly

[GermDefence](https://www.germdefence.org/) is a website that can help you identify simple ways to protect yourself and others in your household from COVID-19 and other viruses. People who use GermDefence are less likely to catch flu and other infections and are less likely to spread them at home.

There is further guidance on protecting yourself and others in living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

**Children and young people (aged 18 years and under) who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19**

Respiratory infections are common in children and young people, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19 and RSV.

For most children and young people, these illnesses will not be serious, and they will soon recover following rest and plenty of fluids.

Very few children and young people with respiratory infections become seriously unwell. This is also true for children and young people with long-term conditions. Some children under 2, especially those born prematurely or with a heart condition, can be more seriously unwell from [RSV](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bronchiolitis/).

Attending education is hugely important for children and young people’s health and their future.

**When children and young people with symptoms should stay at home and when they can return to education**

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.

All children and young people with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

It can be difficult to know when to seek help if your child is unwell. If you are worried about your child, especially if they are aged under 2 years old, then you should seek medical help.

**What to do if you have a positive COVID-19 test result**

**Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people**

If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 even if you do not have any symptoms. You can pass on the infection to others, even if you have no symptoms.

Many people with COVID-19 will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days. If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days after the day you took your test. There is [different advice for children and young people aged 18 and under](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#Children).

During this period there are actions you can take to reduce the risk of passing COVID-19 on to others.

Try to work from home if you can. If you are unable to work from home, talk to your employer about options available to you.

If you have been asked to attend a medical or dental appointment in person, contact your healthcare provider and let them know about your positive test result.

You may wish to ask friends, family or neighbours to get food and other essentials for you.

At the end of this period, if you have a high temperature or feel unwell, try to follow this advice until you feel well enough to resume normal activities and you no longer have a high temperature if you had one.

Although many people will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days, some people may be infectious to other people for up to 10 days from the start of their infection. You should avoid meeting people at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19, especially [those whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk), for 10 days after the day you took your test.

**If you leave your home**

If you leave your home during the 5 days after your positive test result the following steps will reduce the chance of passing on COVID-19 to others:

* wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask
* avoid crowded places such as public transport, large social gatherings, or anywhere that is enclosed or poorly ventilated
* take any exercise outdoors in places where you will not have close contact with other people
* cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose and before you eat or handle food; avoid touching your face

**Reduce the spread of infection in your household**

While you are infectious there is a high risk of passing your infection to others in your household. These are [simple things you can do to help prevent the spread](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065735/AG232_Safe_at_home_infographic.pdf):

* try to keep your distance from people you live with
* in shared areas wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask, especially if you live with people whose [immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk)
* ventilate rooms you have been in by opening windows and leaving them open for at least 10 minutes after you have left the room
* wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
* regularly clean frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles and remote controls, and shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
* advise anyone that does need to come into your home that you have a positive test result, so they can take precautions to protect themselves such as wearing a well-fitting face covering or a surgical face mask, keeping their distance if they can, and washing their hands regularly

[GermDefence](https://www.germdefence.org/) is a website that can help you identify simple ways to protect yourself and others in your household from COVID-19 and other viruses. People who use GermDefence are less likely to catch flu and other infections and are less likely to spread them at home.

**What to do if you are a close contact of someone who has had a positive test result for COVID-19**

People who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 are at the highest risk of becoming infected because they are most likely to have prolonged close contact. People who stayed overnight in the household of someone with COVID-19 while they were infectious are also at high risk.

If you are a household or overnight contact of someone who has had a positive COVID -19 test result it can take up to 10 days for your infection to develop. It is possible to pass on COVID-19 to others, even if you have no symptoms.

You can reduce the risk to other people by taking the following steps:

* avoid contact with anyone you know who is at [higher risk of becoming severely unwell](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#higher-risk) if they are infected with COVID-19, especially [those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk)
* limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
* wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask if you do need to have close contact with other people, or you are in a crowded place
* wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitiser

If you develop symptoms of a respiratory infection try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people and follow the guidance for people with symptoms.

If you are a contact of someone with COVID-19 but do not live with them or did not stay in their household overnight, you are at lower risk of becoming infected. There is [guidance on protecting yourself and others in living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19).

**Children and young people aged 18 years and under who have a positive test result**

It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.

If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can. After 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature, the risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.