

Information updated 02.05.20

If you are making or taking a call to an older person about the coronavirus, your main objective is to reassure them initially and then give some accurate and clear information to protect themselves against infection and let them know what supports are available. Share facts, not fear. Be willing to answer any questions that the older person may have and if you do not have the information, please let the older person know someone will be in touch with an answer to their query as soon as possible.

Support the older person by directly addressing their needs and concerns. It's important that they acknowledge any feelings of fear or anxiety, have a clear communication network, know how to access trust worthy sources of news. Identify how has COVID 19 measures impacted their normal routine and help them establish a new routine that allows them to follow protective measures and keeps them safe.

Keeping the older person safe is our priority. Please share the 'advice on how to prevent fraud' on all calls and remind them there is always support available.

**Q&A**

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. We are still learning how it works.

Coronavirus is an illness that can affect your lungs and airways. Please take precautions and protect yourself. Stay at home, stay safe.

## Section 1: COVID-19 Specific Advice

### Symptoms of Coronavirus, and action to take if you have the symptoms

#### 1. What are symptoms of Coronavirus?

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- fever (high temperature, 38C or higher) or chills
- a cough (this can be any kind of cough, not just dry)
- shortness of breath (breathing difficulties)

Other symptoms are fatigue, headaches, sore throat, aches and pains.

#### 2. What do I do if I have these symptoms?

- Advice for High Risk/ Extremely Medically Vulnerable

**You can phone your GP to be assessed for a test in any of these situations.**

**If you are in a priority group and have:**

- **fever or cough or shortness of breath (breathing difficulties)**

**If you are in a priority group and have been in contact with someone you think or know has coronavirus and you have any of these symptoms:**

- **cough**
- **congestion**
- **runny nose**
- **sore throat**
- **body aches**
- **tiredness**

If you develop the symptoms of COVID-19, keep away from other people so isolate yourself to stop the spread of infection - this means going into a different, well-ventilated room, with a phone. Seek clinical advice by phoning your GP or using the HSE Live phonenumber 1850 24 1850. In an emergency, call 112 or 999 if you are seriously ill. Do this as soon as you get symptoms. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital unless you are told to do so.

If you need to go to hospital as a result of catching coronavirus, prepare a single hospital bag. This should include your next of kin or emergency contact, a list of the medications you take (including dose and frequency), any information on your planned care appointments and things you would need for an overnight stay (snacks, pyjamas, toothbrush, medication etc.). If you have an advanced care plan, please include that.

- Advice for all other callers, who are NOT in the high risk category/ who are NOT extremely medically vulnerable

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus, you will need to self-isolate and phone your GP **to discuss your symptoms and whether a test is required**. Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. The GP will assess you over the phone. If they think you need to be tested for coronavirus, they will arrange a test.

Infection can spread through both direct but also indirect contact so you need to be careful what you touch in case someone who is infected has touched it the same item.

**Some people's symptoms are so mild that they have had coronavirus without realising it.**

## Government Measures on COVID-19

### 3. What measures have the government introduced?

Updated 02.05.20

**On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Government's 'Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business' was released. Reopening society and business will be based on a 3 week review process, the current phases would commence on the following dates:**

- Phase 1 18th May
- Phase 2 8th June
- Phase 3 29th June
- Phase 4 20th July
- Phase 5 10th August

**Everyone must continue to maintaining good handwashing and respiratory hygiene throughout each of the phases. Social-distancing measures must also be followed at all times, at all phases. Stricter measures may have to be reintroduced if there is surge of infection. The advice is subject to change.**

**What older people need to know?**

- **Face coverings:**  
Wearing of face coverings (not masks) in community is being introduced. Guidance around this is expected within the next two weeks.
- **Cocooning**  
Most cocooning advice remains the same and in place until June 8<sup>th</sup> (Phase 2). However, from May 5<sup>th</sup>, you may go out for a short walk for exercise beyond your garden or yard. If you choose to go for a short walk you should:
  - strictly adhere to 2 metres physical (social) distancing measures
  - avoid other people as much as possible
  - avoid touching people or surfaces
  - wash your hands on returning home

**Cocooning measures are being relaxed somewhat from Phase 2 i.e. June 8<sup>th</sup>.**

- From June 8<sup>th</sup>, over 70s and medically vulnerable will be able to access retailers for specific designated hours with strict social distancing; provision of gloves and ideally wearing face coverings.
- From June 8<sup>th</sup> visits to homes of over 70s and medically vulnerable by no more than a small number of persons for a short period of time will be permitted albeit they are wearing gloves, face coverings and maintaining strict 2m social distancing
- **Family-type social gatherings:**

- **Current restrictions on attendance at funerals to a maximum of ten people and only members of the household, close family or close friends if the deceased has no household or family members will continue throughout Phase 1 until June 8<sup>th</sup> (Phase 2).**
- **From Phase 2, June 8<sup>th</sup> slightly larger number of people can attend funerals but still restricted to immediate family and close friends and limited to a maximum number of mourners for a limited period of time where social distancing can be maintained.**
- **Non-COVID Care and Services:**
  - **Care and services will continue to delivered in new ways (e.g. through telephone, online, virtual clinics etc) with new models of care to reassure any concerns older people may have**
  - **From Phase 3 (June 29<sup>th</sup>) a phased approach to visiting at hospital / residential healthcare centre / other residential settings will be introduced bearing in mind the layout and features of types of settings and each individual centre and also taking account of the availability of personal protective equipment and other protections. A return to 'normal' visiting for hospitals etc. won't be implemented until Phase 5 ( August 10<sup>th</sup>)**
- **Social:**
  - **Cafes and restaurants providing onsite food will open in Phase 3 (June 29<sup>th</sup>)**
  - **Pubs, Hairdressers will remained closed until Phase 5 (August 10<sup>th</sup>)**
- **Everybody must stay at home except in specific circumstances. Restrictions to remain in place until May 18<sup>th</sup>**

The specific circumstances include travel to and from work for essential health, social care and work that cannot be done from home; to shop for food, household goods or collect a meal; to attend medical appointments, collect medicines and other health products.

Other exemptions include farming, the care of animals and leaving home for vital family reasons such as providing care for the elderly or vulnerable.
- All public or private gatherings of any number of people outside a single household or living unit are prohibited, including social family visits that are not for vital reasons
- All non-essential retail outlets are too close to the public and all others are to implement physical distancing. Updated list of essential retail outlet can be found [here](#).
- All household contacts of someone waiting for a test should restrict their movements.
- All non-essential visiting to other person's homes should be avoided.
- **Reduce and minimise social interaction** in the specific circumstances outlined when you can leave the home
- **Social distancing:** keeping a 2m (6ft) space between you and other people in the specific circumstances when you can leave the home (travel to and from work for essential work that cannot be done from home; to shop for food, household goods or collect a meal; to attend medical appointments, collect medicines and other health products).
- **Self-isolate if you have 'flu-like symptoms**

## Information/Guidance around Cocooning

### 4. What is cocooning?

**Updated 02.05.20 Cocooning is advisory, not mandatory. Current cocooning measures are in place until June 8<sup>th</sup>. See above for how these measures will be relaxed somewhat after this date.**

Cocooning is a measure to protect people who are over 70 years of age or those who are extremely medically vulnerable (as listed below) by minimising all interaction between them and others to keep them safe.

This means that those who are over 70 years or those extremely medically vulnerable are advised not to leave their homes, and within their homes should minimise all non-essential contact with other members of their household. They must 'cocoon' and follow the face-to-face distancing measures below. If cocooning you must not go outside your home and garden. **If you are living in a long term residential care facility, talk to your carer to determine what is the safest option for you regarding a short walk for exercise.**

### How to cocoon

#### Do

1. Stay at home and avoid any face to face contact **till June 8<sup>th</sup>**
2. If you have a garden or balcony, spend time outside for fresh air.
3. Ask neighbours, family or friends to get any shopping or medicine you need - do not go out shopping
4. Arrange for food or medicine deliveries to be left outside your door.
5. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media if you have access.
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services
7. Ensure you keep phones/devices charged, and have credit on your phone so that you can stay connected.

**From May 5<sup>th</sup>, you may go out for a short walk for exercise beyond your garden or yard. If you choose to go for a short walk you should:**

- **strictly adhere to 2 metres physical (social) distancing measures**
- **avoid other people as much as possible**
- **avoid touching people or surfaces**
- **wash your hands on returning home**

#### Don't

1. Strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
2. Do not leave your house.
3. Do not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces for example family homes, weddings and religious services.
4. Do not go out for shopping and, when arranging food or medication deliveries, these should be left at the door to minimise contact.

**This advice has been extended to June 8<sup>th</sup>.**

## 5. What do we mean by extremely medical vulnerable?\*

- *People aged  $\geq 70$  years*
- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer

- people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

\*For any essential/key worker advice should be sought from Occupational Health who can give specific advice on individual conditions.

## 6. Am I more at risk if I smoke?

Yes, smoking affects the immune system in the airways, lung tissue and throughout the body. This reduces your natural protection against infection.

## 7. What should you do if you have someone else living with you?

Only those who are extremely medically vulnerable are being advised to 'cocoon' but all in the household should support there person in cocooning and to stringently follow guidance on physical distancing. They can do this by:

1. Keeping at least 1 metre (3 ft) and where possible 2 metres away from you, if they have to enter the same room as you
2. Cleaning their hands regularly and making sure to cough or sneeze into their elbow or tissue and bin immediately
3. Using a different toilet and bathroom to you or else clean it before you use it - consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with you using the facilities first
4. Using separate towels from you, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes
5. Taking it in turns to use the kitchen
6. Not sharing cutlery and utensils
7. Cleaning all surfaces with usual household detergent

If the rest of your household stringently follow advice on physical distancing and minimise the risk of spreading the virus within the home by following the advice above, there is no need for them to also cocoon.

## 8. How can I get assistance with foods and medicines if I am cocooning?

- Ask family, friends and neighbours can support you once you adhere to cocooning guidelines and they adhere to physical distancing guidelines. Where possible use online services.
- Contact ALONE on 0818222024 seven days a week from 8am – 8pm, for all older people and their families to contact if they would like any advice, reassurance or practical support in terms

of delivering food, fuel and medication ALONE through the local authorities and our network of volunteers and partners nationwide, we will source someone local that can assist.

- **If they have access to technology like a smart phone or ipad etc. let them know of the support services available that can help. See Technology support below.**

## 9. What is the advice for visitors, including those who are providing care for you?

- Contact regular visitors to your home, such as friends and family to let them know that you are cocooning and that they should not visit you during this time unless they are providing essential care for you. Essential care includes things like help with washing, dressing, or feeding.
- If you receive regular health or social care from an organisation, either through your local authority or paid for by yourself, inform your care providers that you are cocooning and agree a plan for continuing your care. **(Home Support Staff whether employed by the HSE or by external home support providers must check their temperature prior to starting work and again when you return home from work using your own their own thermometer. If temperature exceeds 37.5°c contact your Line Manager by phone for instructions)**
- If you receive essential care from friends or family members, speak to your carers about extra precautions they can take to keep you safe. Speak to your carers about backup plans for your care in case your main carer is unwell and needs to self-isolate. Visits from people who provide essential support should continue, unless they have symptoms.

## 10. What is the advice for informal carers after the new government measures 27.03.20?

If you are caring for someone who is over 70 or extremely medically vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk at the current time. Ensure you follow advice on good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

- only care that is essential should be provided.
- wash your hands on arrival and often, especially before and after being in contact with the person you are caring for. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser.
- avoid touching your face.
- 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 immediately and wash your hands afterwards.
- do not visit or provide care if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care.
- provide information on who they should call if they feel unwell, write out the phone number of their GP and GP out-of-hours service and the HSE website and HSELive phone number ([1850 24 1850](tel:1850241850)) and leave these prominently displayed.
- if it is an emergency, call the emergency services at 112 or 999 and remember to tell them that the person may have or has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- find out about different sources of support that are available.
- look after your own well-being and physical health during this time.

**The following contact details may be helpful:**

- **Family Carers Ireland have a dedicated Careline 1800 240724. [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie)**

- Alzheimer Society of Ireland provide a National Helpline on 1800 341 341,  
email  
[helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie) or via Live Chat at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

## 11. What happens is my Home Help/Carer develops symptoms of COVID-19 and can no longer visit?

You should contact your Public Health Nurse or whoever organised your care to arrange a substitute carer.

## Visiting/supporting older people

As of the 13.03.20 ALONE implemented a pause on volunteers entering older people's homes and instead they now telephone their older person.

All visits to hospitals will cease with some exceptions on compassionate grounds, but you will need to discuss the particular circumstances with the management of the individual unit.

## 12. Should I visit my older parent/ relative/ neighbour?

Everybody must stay at home except in specific circumstances. If you provide care for an older person or vulnerable person you can visit the individual, whilst practicing social distancing, If visiting, you need to keep a bit more distance, no kissing, hugging and please practice good hand and respiratory. Clean your hands when entering the house and when leaving.

## 13. Should children keep away from grandparents even if neither of them are sick?

Yes. Encourage grandchildren to ring their grandparents or write to them instead.

## 14. How do I support my older parent/neighbour who is anxious about COVID-19?

1. Take a look at the HSE website on coronavirus  
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> and  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/> and keep both yourself and the older person informed of any key updates for example social distancing.
2. Tell them to look after themselves and reassure them they will always be someone to help them and support them.
3. Ask them to watch the news only once a day.
4. Inform the older person of all the tips they need to avoid infection.
5. Support them by answering any questions they may have.
6. Offer to help with errand such as grocery shopping, collection fuel etc. If you are unable to this, ring the ALONE office who can arrange this
7. If they have serious concerns that they have the virus, they can ring their GP or emergency services.

8. Encourage them to go to take a walk in their garden or backyard. **From May 8th they may go out for a short walk for exercise beyond your garden or yard.**
9. Encourage them to spend time with the windows open to let in the fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight.
10. Encourage them to spending time doing things they enjoy– this might include reading, cooking, other indoor hobbies or listening to favourite radio programmes or watching TV.
11. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol

## 15. I have concerns that my older relative/neighbour etc. may be infected, what should I do?

**You should not enter the home or have direct contact with anyone who has been diagnosed or is a suspected case of COVID-19.**

**Everybody must stay at home except in specific circumstances listed in the answer to question 1.**

- Contact ALONE on 0818 222 024 who can call the older person directly
- Reassure the older person by phone there is no need to worry and support is readily available.
- Ask them to follow the guidance below if they have the symptoms and offer to call the GP directly if they wish.
- Ensure they know you or ALONE can provide practical support in terms of collecting groceries and medication
- Please keep in contact by phone with the older person and link in with ALONE or help to arrange any practical support they require e.g. food stocked, medication bought etc.

## Testing for COVID-19

### 16. Who gets tested for COVID-19?

Priority testing for health staff and people in high-risk group groups with symptoms has been introduced. General health testing will be increased for those with symptoms.

You can phone your GP to be assessed for a test in, if you are in a priority group and **suddenly experience one of these symptoms and there is no other obvious cause:**

- **fever**
- **cough**
- **shortness of breath**

If you are in a priority group and have been in contact with someone you think or know has coronavirus and you have any of these symptoms:

- cough
- congestion
- runny nose
- sore throat
- body aches
- tiredness

Priority groups for testing include people with specific symptoms of coronavirus who are also

- close contacts of a confirmed case

- healthcare workers who are in the frontline and have regular patient contact
- in groups most at risk of severe infection, such as people with ischaemic heart disease, hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, active malignancy in last 5 years, chronic lung disease, chronic renal disease, chronic liver disease and the extremely medically vulnerable as outlined in the guidance on cocooning people who live with those in the above groups
- people who live with those in the above groups
- staff and residents of nursing homes and other residential care settings and those in direct provision, homeless, Roma and travelling community settings where symptom management is difficult
- pregnant women to ensure they are managed safely in hospital

## 17. How do I get tested for COVID-19?

If you have symptoms, please contact your GP to discuss your symptoms and whether a test is required

You will either have your test:

- at a community test centre - some test centres are drive-thru
- in your home

The HSE may text or call people for the following reasons:

- You've been identified by our public health teams as a contact of a suspected or confirmed case
- To send appointment details for a COVID19 test
- To send COVID-19 test results (from testing service)

An automated system will send out a text with details of the appointment so please keep an eye on your phone in the days following your contact and ensure the GP has the correct number on file. You will get a text message with the time and location of your test a few days after your GP arranges your test. The text will include a reference number. You will need to bring this to your appointment.

## 18. My appointment for a test is at a drive-thru testing centre, but I can't drive! What do I do?

Talk to your GP and they will inform you what is the best option for you to get the test done, depending on your circumstance and health needs.

(Currently that there is no service for Community Response Fora or volunteers in the provision of transport to Testing Centres).

## Information on self-isolating

### 19. When do I self-isolate?

You will need to self-isolate:

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus
- before you get tested for coronavirus
- while you wait for test results

- if you have had a positive test result for coronavirus

## 20. How do I self-isolate?

Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. You may need to do this if you have symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is to stop other people from getting it. If you have symptoms then you **MUST** self-isolate and contact your GP by phone. If they think you need to get tested for the virus, they will organise this. While you wait for the test results or if you test positive but have mild symptoms, you can self-isolate at home.

- Stay at home, in a room with the window open.
- Keep away from others in your home as much as you can.
- Check your symptoms - call a doctor if they get worse.
- Phone your doctor if you need to - do not visit them.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes using a tissue - clean your hands properly afterwards.
- Wash your hands properly and often
- Use your own towel - do not share a towel with others.
- Clean your room every day with a household cleaner or disinfectant.

## 21. When do I stop self-isolating?

Only stop self-isolation when both of these apply to you:

- you have had no fever for 5 days
- it has been 14 days since you first developed symptoms

If your symptoms develop or get worse, phone your GP. If it is an emergency, call an ambulance on 112 or 999 and tell them that you may have Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Everybody must stay at home as part of the government COVID-19 restriction except in specific circumstances as outlined above.

## 22. I care for an older person who is self-isolating, what should I do?

If possible, only one person should look after the person self-isolating. Ideally, this would be someone who is in good health. If this is you, please follow the advice below:

- stay away from them as much as possible (at least 2 metres) and avoid touching them - use your phone to communicate
- wash your hands properly every time you have contact with the person
- if you have face masks, wear one and have them on when you have to be in the same room
- if you have to clean phlegm or spit from their face use a clean tissue, put it into a waste bag and wash your hands
- put them in a well-ventilated room alone
- limit their movement in the house
- get them to use a different toilet if possible
- limit the number of caregivers
- keep them away from other older people, people with long-term conditions or pregnant women

## 23. An individual in my home is self-isolating, what should I do?

If you live in the home with the older person/other people live in the house. The advice for anyone who is self-isolating and living with other people is:

- Stay in a room with a window you can open.
- If you can, use a toilet and bathroom that no one else in the house uses.
- If you have to share a bathroom with others, use the bathroom last and then clean it thoroughly.
- Do not share any items you've used with other people.

Things you should not share include:

- food
- dishes
- drinking glasses
- cups
- knives, forks and spoons
- towels
- bedding

## 24. If a person has COVID-19 in the home, how do I arrange their meals?

If possible, have someone leave your food on a tray at your bedroom door. When you have finished, leave everything on the tray at the door. This should be collected and put in a dishwasher and hands washed properly afterwards. If you don't have a dishwasher:

- wash in hot soapy water, wearing rubber gloves
- leave to air dry
- wash the rubber gloves while you are still wearing them
- remove gloves and wash your hands

## 25. If a person has COVID-19 in the home, how do I arrange for their laundry to be cleaned?

Put your laundry in a plastic bag. Have someone collect it from your bedroom door. If possible, they should wear rubber gloves. They should:

1. wash the laundry at the highest temperature for the material, with a laundry detergent
2. clean all surfaces and the area around the washing machine
3. wash the rubber gloves while still wearing them
4. wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after removing the gloves or handling dirty laundry
5. If possible tumble dry and iron using a hot setting or steam iron.

## 26. If a person has COVID-19 in the home, how do I manage rubbish?

- Put all personal waste, including used tissues, masks and all cleaning waste in a plastic rubbish bag. Tie the bag when it is almost full. Place the plastic bag in a second bin bag and tie the bag.
- Leave the bag somewhere safe. The bags should be left for 3 days before collection.
- Dispose of other waste the way you usually would.

## 27. If a person has COVID-19 in the home, what can they do when self-insolating?

- Keep yourself mobile by getting up and moving around as much as possible. If you have a garden, backyard or balcony go out and get some fresh air, but keep more than 2 metres away from other people.
- Stay hydrated and try to avoid alcohol if you are not feeling well. Read about smoking and coronavirus.
- You may find it helps to stay in touch with friends or relatives by phone or on social media.
- Self-isolation can be boring or frustrating. It may affect your mood and feelings. You may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping.

## General Questions on COVID-19

### 28. If I have coronavirus, should I continue to take my medication?

If you have coronavirus, continue to take any medication you were already taking, unless you are told not to by a healthcare professional. This includes anti-inflammatories (NSAID) such as ibuprofen, naproxen or diclofenac.

### 29. Is the virus airborne?

Health professionals are still learning how it spreads. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes

### 30. Is there a treatment for the infection?

There is no specific treatment for this disease so the approach used to treat patients with coronavirus-related infections is to treat the clinical symptoms (e.g. fever, difficulty breathing). Supportive care (e.g. supportive therapy and monitoring – oxygen therapy, fluid management and antivirals) can be highly effective for those infected.

### 31. Are face masks effective in protecting against COVID-19?

Face masks help prevent further spread of infection from those who are sick to others around them. However, face masks do not seem to be as effective in protecting those who are not infected.

### 32. How long this outbreak will last?

Unfortunately, it is not possible to predict how long the outbreak will last and how it will evolve overall. It is a new virus and therefore a lot of uncertainty remains.

## Tips to prevent Infection

### 33. What are the top tips to prevent infection?

There are a few things you can do to help prevent infection.

1. Stay at home, stay safe. All public or private gatherings of any number of people outside a single household or living unit are prohibited, including social family visits that are not for vital reasons
2. Washing your hands properly and often is very important. You need to spend 20 seconds cleaning your hands with soap and warm water or alcohol-based hand washes to ensure they are clean.
3. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.
4. Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as their remote control and phone
6. Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

### 34. What extra precautions should high risk-groups take?

**Refer to cocooning guidance above**

1. Stay at home, stay safe
2. Avoid face to face contact (Visits from people who provide essential support to you such as healthcare, personal support with your daily needs or social care should continue)
3. You should have an alternative list of people who can help you with your care if your main carer becomes unwell.
4. Tell visitors not to visit if they have any symptoms of coronavirus.
5. Meet people in a well-ventilated room or outdoors.
6. Ask visitors to wash their hands properly.
7. Ask visitors to keep a space of at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and them.
8. Keep physically active, if possible.
9. Ask a family member or neighbour to run errands e.g. prescriptions, groceries and have over-the-counter medicines and supplies, for example, tissues and a thermometer. If they do not have someone available, ask if they would like a practical support volunteer to do this.
10. Make a joint plan with family, friends and neighbours on what to do if you become ill.

## Section 3: Other information/ Questions

### Access to information for all

#### 35. Where do I get information on Coronavirus that is accurate and correct?

The HSE <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> and the Department of Health <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/472f64-covid-19-coronavirus-guidance-and-advice/>

#### 36. Is the ALONE phone line free?

In terms of the phone line, it's not a free phone number, but it is only the cost of a call. It would have taken time to set up the free phone line and it would be on a different number. Please remind all older people there is always the option to ring and ALONE to call back. **If this or finance in general is an issue, check if the older person is a Vodafone customer and ALONE could give them a credit voucher.**

#### 37. Is there a sign language service available?

A HSElive has deaf interpreting service (<https://slis.ie/iris/#remote-interpreting-iris>) available Monday to Friday 9am -7pm., Saturday 10am-4pm. This uses sign language and you can book an appointment online or email [hselive@hse.ie](mailto:hselive@hse.ie)

If the older person would like support on accessing this service, their Support Coordinator is available. Update 16.03.20 Please note, there has been an increased volume of communication to Sign Language Interpreting service, so there may be a delay in a response. All queries however, will be responded to.

#### 38. I don't understand what I read about COVID 19. Is there information available which is easy to read?

##### **New Question 10.04.20**

Many organisations who work to support people with disabilities and their families have produced easy to read information guides on COVID-19. Please see [Inclusion Ireland](#), Enable Ireland and [National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers](#) websites for easy read information on a range of COVID-19 topics which can be printed off.

The [National Adult Literacy Agency](#) (NALA) is also providing help with understanding health information. You can visit their website to find COVID words and terms explained. You can also Freephone 1800 20 20 56 to talk through the information with a NALA tutor or you can text LEARN to 50050.

Questions about accessing the Doctor, pension,  
groceries etc.

### 39. What is the protocol when I need to see my GP for a prescription or concern that isn't coronavirus related or attend a medical appointment?

**All hospital appointments for non-essential surgery and health procedures are postponed.**

The HSE advises everyone to access medical assistance remotely, wherever possible. However, if you have a scheduled hospital or other medical appointment during this period, talk to your GP or specialist to ensure you continue to receive the care you need and determine which of these are absolutely essential.

It is possible that your hospital may need to cancel or postpone some clinics and appointments. You should contact your hospital or clinic to confirm appointments.

### 40. How do I collect my prescription/collect medicines?

Everyone needs to stay at home, so changes have been to make it easier for you to get your medicines. These changes mean:

- you do not need to get a paper copy of your prescription – phone your GP and they'll send your prescription to your pharmacist
- some prescriptions will be valid for 9 months instead of 6 months - your GP or pharmacist will be able to tell you by phone
- you may be able to get a repeat prescription without a new script – phone your pharmacist to discuss this

These changes are temporary. They will be reviewed once the pandemic is over.

If you have coronavirus or respiratory symptoms, do not go to your pharmacy. Phone your pharmacist to order a prescription. Ask a family member to collect your medicines or get in contact with ALONE who can follow up with their relevant Local Authority.

### 41. How do I get my pension collected?

ALONE is offering support to older people to collect their pensions. Where an older person calls requesting support with accessing their pension from the post office, staff should determine what current supports they have available to them and where they have no alternative, ALONE will offer to link them with an ALONE volunteer to act as a temporary agent to collect their pension on their behalf. The older person should be advised that this may take 3 – 5 working days to arrange but not to worry as An Post has announced that they will hold all payments for 90 days. If the older person requires the payment immediately, determine why and establish if their current financial need can be addressed through ALONE's practical supports.

The process for availing of pension support is:

1. Link them with an ALONE volunteer in their area who can do this on their behalf during the cocooning period

2. Where we do not have an available ALONE volunteer in the area, contact the community guard to see if they can support
3. Or liaise with ALONE's volunteer department to determine if new bank of volunteers coming through the system could be used
4. **If ALONE cannot source a volunteer, please forward to the relevant Local Authority who will forward the request on appropriately for followup**

A temporary agent form must be filled in by the older person and the temporary agent, this form and the older person's DEASP card must be given / left out for the Volunteer to bring with them to the post office.

When collecting a payment, a 'Temporary Agent' must produce the form and the recipient's card as issued by the DEASP as well as their own valid photo I.D. e.g current Passport, Driving Licence or Public Service Card.

Advise both the older person and the volunteer that An post is putting the payment in a sealed and stamped envelope so that is visible to the older person that the payment has not been opened on collection.

#### 42. How do I get my social welfare payment (pension etc.) paid directly into my account?

**New question 27.03.20 You can complete the *Application form for Direct Payment to an Account in a Financial Institution and send to the appropriate office.* See below for the link**

<http://gcul.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Paying-Social-Welfare-into-CU-Account.pdf>

#### 43. Should I cancel my carers/meals on wheels etc.?

No, continue as normal unless you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in which case you should self-isolate from everyone as outlined by the HSE. Please get in contact with ALONE who can support you with delivering food, medication and fuel.

If you are concerned by the symptoms that are consistent with the virus, please contact your GP.

#### 44. Is ibuprofen safe to take if I have Coronavirus?

There is currently no strong evidence that ibuprofen can make coronavirus (Covid-19) worse.

## **If Older Person is still anxious refer them to Telephone/Support Coordinator**

The information below comes from a variety of sources and is not all endorsed by the HSE/Department of Health.

### **Advice for older people to prevent crime (Guards)**

- Keep lights on inside and out.

- Do not keep large amounts of cash at home.
- For up to date advice on COVID-19 visit HSE.ie
- Keep valuables & keys out of sight.
- Visit [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) for more crime prevention advice
- Be alert to online and telephone scams.
- Do not share personal or financial data.
- KEEP UNEXPECTED CALLERS OUT
- Do not open the door. Use the door chain. Look for ID.
- If you require assistance call your local Garda station.
- Keep a lookout for friends and neighbours while adhering to appropriate physical distancing.
- Use only the services of people you know and trust.

There has been some ‘scam’ calls made to older people recently.

- If they suspect that someone is trying to commit fraud, **contact their local Garda station** (not 999/112)
- Remind them they can contact ALONE on 0818 222 024 for support.
- Remind them not to give their bank details or your credit/debit card to anyone they do not trust. They may be asked for the details by text, by email, over the phone or in person, do not reply.

**Please give all older people this advice on all calls.**

## Advice for older people for making payments over the phone and online (Banking & Payments Federation Ireland)

- You can also make payments over the phone with your debit (ATM) or credit card.
- Make sure it is a retailer or company you are familiar with. You should always call them and if possible know the person you are speaking to.
- You be asked for your card number, expiry date and CVV (3 digits at the back of the card).
- You will never be asked for the PIN for your card.
- Be careful to check that any callers are who they say they are.

### 45. I’m not internet savvy. Can I ask someone I trust to help me with my online banking and shopping?

- If you have no alternative, you can nominate another person you **trust** to help with your banking on a *temporary basis*.
- They can usually access your current account in a limited way.
- They can help with paying bills and shopping.
- You and the trusted person you nominate will need to sign a form to set up this temporary “third party authorisation” process.
- There may be extra verifications in place on some occasions to confirm the person is following your wishes.
- You can cancel the authority when you wish, and that person will no longer be able to access your money.

Always remember that as the account holder you control what happens in your account. Do not be afraid to ask the bank for advice if you have any concerns whatsoever. Please find the dedicated phone lines for each of the main banks for older and vulnerable customers during the Covid-19 crisis listed in the *Directory of services*.

**Always remember that as the account holder you control what happens in your account. Do not be afraid to ask the bank for advice if you have any concerns whatsoever.**

## Directory of Services

Service	Organisation	Phone Number
Alcohol & Drug Support	HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline	1800 459 459
Alzheimer Society	Alzheimer Society of Ireland's National Helpline (Call back service)	1800 341 341
Cancer Support	Irish Cancer Society Nurseline	1800 200 700
Carer Support for End of Life	Irish Hospice Foundation	(01)-6793188
COPD	COPD Adviceline	1800 832146
Dementia Support	Alzheimer National Helpline	1800 341 341
Local Practical support	Carlow County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 814 300
Local Practical support	Cavan County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 300 404
Local Practical support	Clare County Council Community Response Helpline	1890 252943
Local Practical support	Cork City Council Community Response Helpline	1800 222 226
Local Practical support	Cork County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 805 819
Local Practical support	Donegal County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 928 982
Local Practical support	Dublin City Council Community Response Helpline	01 2228555
Local Practical support	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community Response Helpline	01 2713199
Local Practical support	Fingal County Council Community Response Helpline	01 890 5000
Local Practical support	Galway City Council Community Response Helpline	1800 400 150
Local Practical support	Galway County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 92 8 894
Local Practical support	Kerry County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 807 009
Local Practical support	Kildare County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 300 174
Local Practical support	Kilkenny County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 500000
Local Practical support	Laois County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 832 010
Local Practical support	Leitrim County Council Community Response Helpline	071 9650473
Local Practical support	Limerick Local Authorities Community Response Helpline	1800 832 005
Local Practical support	Longford County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 300 122
Local Practical support	Louth County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 805 817
Local Practical support	Mayo County Council Community Response Helpline	094 9064660

Local Practical support	Meath County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 808 809
Local Practical support	Monaghan County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 804 158
Local Practical support	Offaly County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 81 81 81
Local Practical support	Roscommon County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 200 727
Local Practical support	Sligo County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 292 765
Local Practical support	South Dublin County Council Community Response Helpline	01 4149043
Local Practical support	Tipperary County Council Community Response Helpline	0761 06 5000
Local Practical support	Waterford City and County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 250 185
Local Practical support	Westmeath County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 805 816
Local Practical support	Wexford County Council Community Response Helpline	053 919 6000
Local Practical support	Wicklow County Council Community Response Helpline	1800 868 399
Managing Money/Banking Support	KBC Bank Dedicated Line	1800 804 472
Managing Money/Banking Support	Permanent TSB Dedicated Line	1800 218 000
Managing Money/Banking Support	AIB Dedicated Line	1800 207 232
Managing Money/Banking Support	Ulster Bank Ireland Dedicated Line	1800 656 001
Managing Money/Banking Support	National Adult Literacy Agency	1800 20 20 56
Managing Money/Banking Support	National Adult Literacy Agency text line -Text 'LEARN' to:	50050
Medical Support	HSE Liveline	(01)850241850
Mental Health	Aware Support Line	1800 80 48 48
Mental Health	Samaritans	116 123
Mental Health	Pieta House Text HELP to 51444	1800 247 247 or
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Dublin North, Dublin North City, Dublin North West	076-6959528
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Louth and Meath	01 6914632
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Kildare, West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, Dublin South West	045 920410
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin South East	01 2164511
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	South Tipperary. Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford	056-7784325
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Kerry and Cork	021 4927550
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary and East Limerick	067 46470

Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Galway, Roscommon and Mayo	091 748432
Safeguarding Team (HSE)	Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan	071-9834660
Technology Support	COVID19 Tech (Tech Support for over 65s) <a href="https://covid19tech.ie/">https://covid19tech.ie/</a>	(01)9633288
Technology Support	Age Action Getting Started KIT	01 8730372
Technology Support	Vodafone Tech/Smartphone Advice Line for older people	(01) 8731166
Volunteer Support	ALONE Volunteer Support Line	(01) 679 1032