

Coronavirus Advice - An Update

To Chairs and Secretaries

Please find enclosed updated advice from Healthwatch - the NHS consumer watchdog.

What's the risk of catching coronavirus in the UK?

The NHS and Public Health England are well prepared for outbreaks of new infectious diseases. The NHS has put in place measures to ensure the safety of all patients and NHS staff while also ensuring services are available to the public as normal.

The UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. But the risk to individuals remains low. If you have arrived back to the UK from mainland China and other specified areas, follow the advice for [returning travellers](#).

How is coronavirus spread?

Like the common cold, coronavirus (also known as Covid-19) infection usually occurs through close contact with a person with novel coronavirus via cough and sneezes or hand contact. You can also be infected by touching contaminated surfaces if you do not wash your hands.

The risk of being in close contact with a person with coronavirus or contaminated surfaces is very low at the moment, as members of the public who have visited Wuhan, Hubei province, China are currently in isolation.

Symptoms of coronavirus

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

When to call 111

Based on the scientific advice of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) the UK Chief Medical Officers are advising anyone who has travelled to the UK from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days and is experiencing cough or fever or shortness of breath, to stay indoors and call NHS 111, even if symptoms are mild.

Do not go to a GP surgery or hospital. Call 111, stay indoors and avoid close contact with other people.

**Please note that in some parts of Wales you may have to call
NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47**

[Read here for Latest Advice in full from Healthwatch](#)

How to avoid catching or spreading germs?

Do:

- 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 straight away.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

Don't:

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.