COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, The NHS recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow the NHS recommendations for using a facemask.
  - NHS does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
  - Face masks play a very important role in places like hospitals, but there is very little evidence of widespread benefit for members of the public.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Doctors are learning new things about this virus every day. So far they know that the COVID-19 may not initially cause any symptoms.

You may carry the virus for 2 days or up to 2 weeks before you notice common symptoms that have been specifically linked to the 2019 coronavirus – such as:

- feeling short of breath
- having a cough that gets more severe over time
- a low-grade fever that gradually increases in temperature

What will happen if a health professional thinks I could have coronavirus?

If you could have coronavirus, 111 will notify your local health protection team and direct you to your most appropriate testing location.

The health protection team will take some samples to test for coronavirus

If there's a chance you could have coronavirus, you may be asked to stay away from other people (self-isolate). until it's confirmed if you do or do not have coronavirus.

This means you should for up to 14 days:

- stay at home, not go to work, school or public places
- not use public transport or taxis
- ask friends, family members or delivery services to do errands for you
- try to avoid visitors to your home – it's OK for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick.

Wash Your Hands Often to Stay Healthy

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during,** and **after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhoea
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

COVID-19 information www.healthline.com/health/coronavirus-covid-19

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