



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.

12th November 2020

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

PQ 35750/20 *To ask the Minister for Health if persons are allowed to bring an accompanying person with them to accident and emergency departments under levels 4 and 5 restrictions.*

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I wish to refer you to the following statement on attending Emergency Departments, which has been agreed and will shortly issue nationally to the public:

“Emergency Departments Public Message

Emergency Departments are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Due to Covid19 our Emergency Departments have made some changes to how we work in order to protect our patients and staff. All patients attending the ED will be met at the front door by a doctor or nurse; the Senior Decision Maker. They will ask a series of questions to assess if you have signs or symptoms of Covid19 or are particularly likely to have been exposed to the risk of Covid19. This assessment will determine all the infection prevention and control procedures to be taken during your attendance in ED in order to protect you, other patients and our staff. This assessment will not delay your treatment and care in the ED and, as always, patients will be prioritised for treatment based on ‘urgency of need’.

Some patients who go to ED may be redirected to an alternative service once they are initially assessed by the Senior Decision Maker. This will depend on the type of treatment and care you are likely to need and may include an Injury Unit, a virtual outpatient appointment, a GP or Pharmacist.

Each ED will have two separate patient care pathways,

- one for patients with significant risk of Covid19 infection
- another pathway for patients with no symptoms and unlikely to have been exposed to Covid19

If a patient is seriously ill/injured/unconscious precautions will be taken appropriate to the Covid19 pathway while their emergency is being treated in the usual way, until the position can be clarified later.

Infection prevention and control is really important for your safety so we need to control the number of people in the ED to maintain physical distancing as recommended.

Please wear a face covering/mask on arrival and when in the ED. You should attend alone. A companion/s will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances except for children where one parent may accompany a child. We know this is very difficult but we need to do this to minimise everybody's risk of infection and to keep everyone safe.

Please consider all your health care options if you are feeling unwell. If you have signs or symptoms of Covid19 please call your GP who can arrange a test for you. As always if you need emergency care please call 999/112 or go to your ED."

Yours sincerely,



Ms Margaret Brennan
Assistant National Director
Acute Operations