

Information sheet for hospital inpatients during a COVID-19 outbreak



Version 1.5 16.06.2022

Dear patient

At the moment there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in this hospital. An outbreak means that the virus that causes COVID-19 has spread between a number of people within the hospital. Hospital staff will answer any questions you have about the situation.

When the virus spreads in a hospital it can infect both patients and hospital staff. We understand that it is worrying and disappointing to know there is an outbreak in the hospital. We want you to know that we are doing everything practical to stop the spread of the virus as quickly as possible. However, it can be difficult to stop spread of the virus.

Since the start of the pandemic many extra measures have been put in place to improve the control of this virus and other infections in the hospital. One of the most important measures to control spread of the virus is vaccination. The risk of spread of the virus and the harm caused by spread of the virus is much less when most people are fully vaccinated (including booster). If you are fully vaccinated the risk to you from the outbreak is lower but there is still some risk. It is important to follow all the precautions the staff ask you to follow. If you have not been fully vaccinated or have not received a booster vaccine, please make sure the hospital staff know that you are not vaccinated. They can advise you about any extra precautions you may need to take.

Another important measure is trying to find people who have COVID-19 infection as early as we can. To help us do this you will be asked questions to check if you have developed symptoms of COVID-19. You may be tested for COVID-19 more than once if you are symptomatic or you are a contact of an infected patient. The reason you may be tested more than once is that even with the best technology in the world a single test result cannot prove you don't have COVID-19. We know that having the test can be uncomfortable for some people so thank you for your patience and support.

Even with all these measures in place it is very hard to keep this virus fully under control all the time. Hospitals are very much part of the community. When the COVID-19 virus is very common in the community it is very hard to keep it out of the hospital even with the best efforts of everyone. We are asking you to help us control the spread of the virus.

You can help us keep everyone safe when you are in hospital

- It is good to move around a bit but please do not go into the room or bed-space of other patients or stop to chat with other patients.
- During a COVID-19 outbreak, visiting will be limited. If you do have visitors it is safer for everyone if they are fully vaccinated.
- Don't share items with other patients; such as newspapers, food, headphones etc.
- Clean your hands regularly with the hand gel provided.
- Wear a mask when you are outside of your room or away from your bed-space. If you feel more comfortable wearing a mask all the time please let staff know and they will give you a mask to wear.

- If at any time you get a cough, if you feel unwell such as getting short of breath or if there is a change in your sense of taste or smell please tell a nurse or a doctor.
- It's OK to remind staff to clean their hands or to tell a staff member if you see anything that is not clean.

Important information for going home after discharge

As you have been in a hospital that has a COVID-19 outbreak, you should follow the advice below:

If you have not had a COVID-19 infection:

- You do not usually need to restrict your movements after you go home.
- Please phone your GP for further advice if you experience shortness of breath, a cough, a temperature, (or any other COVID-19 symptoms) or become unwell. A free COVID-19 test can be arranged for you if you develop symptoms. Even if you are fully vaccinated you should contact your GP if you develop symptoms. The vaccine is very good but it does not work perfectly for everyone.

If you have had COVID-19 in the past 7 days: you must self-isolate for seven days from onset of symptoms or from date of positive test. You can exit self-isolation once symptoms have substantially or fully resolved for the final two days (48 hours) of the self-isolation period. You should continue to follow these public health protective measures until day 10:

- Wear an FFP2 mask or medical grade face mask (surgical mask) in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you are in close contact with other people.
- Limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces (excluding childcare and educational settings).
- Avoid contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID19
- Work from home unless it is essential to attend in person.
- Follow all public health protective measures.

If you have been told you have had contact with COVID-19 while in hospital and have been discharged home, you will need to be vigilant for symptoms. If symptoms develop you should self-isolate and contact your GP for further advice. A COVID-19 test can be arranged for you if your doctor thinks you need it.

Further information

You can get further information on COVID-19 at www.hse.ie/coronavirus and information on hand hygiene at www.hse.ie/handhygiene

Please talk to any of our staff at any time if you have any questions or concerns during your time at your hospital.