

Information sheet for hospital inpatients during a COVID-19 outbreak



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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. The details of the wards where we have a problem at the moment and how many people are affected changes from day to day. Hospital staff will answer any questions you have about the situation today.

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 to protect patients and staff but it can be difficult to stop spread of the virus.

Since the start of the pandemic this hospital and the HSE has put many extra measures 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 in any situation 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. If you are fully vaccinated the risk to you from the outbreak is lower but there is still some risk, so it is important to follow all the precautions the staff ask you to follow. If you have not been fully vaccinated, please make sure the hospital staff know that you are not vaccinated so that they can see if there are any extra precautions you can take.

Another important measure is trying to find people who have COVID 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 and you may be tested for COVID-19 more than once. The reason you may be tested more than once is because we know 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 a bit 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 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.

Don't share personal items with other patients.

Clean your hands regularly with the hand gel on the ward.

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.

Visiting will be very limited. If you do have visitors it is safer for everyone if they are fully vaccinated.

If at any time you get a temperature or a cough, if you feel you are getting more short of breath please tell a nurse or a doctor.

It's OK to remind staff to clean their hands.

It's OK to tell a staff member if you see anything that is not clean.

Important information for going home

As you have been in a hospital that has a COVID-19 outbreak, we advise you to:

- If you have been fully vaccinated you do not usually need to restrict your movements after you go home unless there are special circumstances. If there are special circumstances someone will talk to you about that and if you have questions or concerns talk to the hospital staff.
- If you have had COVID 19 within the past 9 months you **do not** need to isolate for 14 days following discharge from hospital unless there are special circumstances.
- If you have not been fully vaccinated you should restrict your movements for 14 days after you leave hospital as you may have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 while you were in hospital. If you have been offered a COVID-19 test at day 10 and if COVID-19 not detected you can stop the restricted movements and go back to normal precautions that apply to everyone.
- The reason for restricting your movements is because there is a chance you may develop COVID-19. You can spread the virus even if you do not have symptoms. By following this advice, you can keep yourself and other people safe.
- Restricting movement means avoiding situations and contact with other people as much as you can. Stay at home or in the place where you live as much as possible.
- You can still go outside to exercise by yourself as long as you keep 2 metres away from other people.

If you experience shortness of breath, cough, temperature, (or any other [COVID-19 symptoms](#)) or become unwell phone your GP for further advice. 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 14 days and have been discharged home from hospital, you must self-isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms with last 5 days without a fever (If asymptomatic, 10 days from date of test).

The following is a list of things to remind you what you should try not do at this time if you have to restrict your movement:

Do not go to work, school or college.

Do not use public transport.

Only allow people you need to help you in your home at this time (no purely social visits)

Do not visit others.

Do not go to the shops or pharmacy unless it's absolutely necessary - where possible, order your groceries online or have some family or friends drop them off.

Do not drop off or collect your children from school unless it's absolutely necessary. Ask family or friends to do this for you. If you have to go, avoid other people. If you travel by car and the children can safely come to the care on their own is best to say in your car.

Do not go to gatherings such as weddings or funerals.

Do not meet face-to-face with older people, anyone with a long-term medical condition.

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.