



## **COVID-19 ESSENTIAL Healthcare Worker on Active Monitoring**

### **– Leaflet for returning to work prior to the end of the monitoring period**

**V8.0, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

#### **What is an Essential Healthcare Worker?**

When a service cannot be staffed safely or a critical skill set to provide critical/essential services is unavailable, then derogation from management may be given to a HCW who has been excluded from work due to close contact with a COVID-19 case **before the end of the 14 days of restricting movements**. This HCW is deemed an essential HCW, for the purposes of this process. The decision for the HCW to return to work lies with management.

#### **What happens next?**

1. Your manager must ensure twice daily monitoring is carried out within the workplace, the first prior to starting the shift and the other during your shift. This monitoring must include a temperature check and you must record your symptoms and temperature on the 'Symptom Monitoring Chart' provided.
2. Daily contact by Occupational Health will continue separate to this monitoring. This may be by phone but is usually by text, reminding you to contact Occupational Health if you develop any symptoms of COVID-19.
3. You must carry a face mask with you at all times and self-monitor for respiratory symptoms such as (**Fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss or change in sense of smell or taste**).
4. Please consider a location(s) in the workplace that you may self-isolate if you become symptomatic.

#### **If you develop potential symptoms OR if your temperature records > 37.5°C:**

**Immediately put on one of the surgical masks and isolate yourself from others (for example stay in go to an empty office).**

1. Once you are isolated from others you may remove the surgical mask. If you need to come in contact with other people for any reason please put on a surgical mask before contact.
2. **Do not attend** your Occupational Health Service or GP, including their out-of-hours/on-call service.
3. **Do not attend** your local Emergency Department unless told to do so Occupational Health, or the ED Consultant.
4. You should phone the **Occupational Health Service (see below link for contact numbers)** and identify yourself as a symptomatic close contact, who has returned to work. If acutely unwell you should phone your local GP service or, if necessary, the ambulance service. (Please check local GP out of hours contact details and add below).
5. If in the workplace, please inform your manager and they will assist in making contact with the Occupational Health service or if in a hospital setting, the Emergency Department to arrange testing if possible.

**If you are well but have been in close contact with a case of COVID-19 you will be asked to limit your social interactions as much as possible for 14 days since your last contact with a case.**

This means:

- You should limit their social interactions in so far as possible.
- Leaving home only to travel to and from work, to travel directly between work and home, without diversion.
- Staying at home when not at work.
- You must adhere to national guidance on social distancing and restricted movement
- Where possible, arrange your groceries online or have some family or friends drop it off to the house.
- You can go outside on your own for walks, runs or cycles.
- You should not use public transport.
- You should avoid contact with at risk or highly vulnerable people  
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/at-risk-groups.html>.

These restrictions can be a source of stress for some people. There are many things that may help you cope better with the period of monitoring:

- Set goals: Setting goals and achieving them can give you a sense of control. The goals must be realistic in the given circumstances and could include writing a diary or learning new skills.
- Keep active: Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, develop mind games to stimulate thinking, for example, remember the plots of movies or passages from books. The possibilities are unlimited.
- Look for or inject humour into the situation: Even smiling and laughing inwardly can provide relief from anxiety and frustration.
- Eat sufficiently and exercise as much as possible: This will help keep the body strong and counteracts the physical effects of stress.
- Actively use stress management techniques: Physical relaxation techniques can reduce stress levels and are useful methods to manage pain and emotional turmoil. Most people are familiar with stress management techniques but not all use them in practice; however, this is the time to the use of such techniques.
- Accept feelings: Being in a stressful situation can cause a lot of different emotional reactions like anger, frustration, anxiety, regrets, second-guessing yourself, self-blame etc. These feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.

### Contact Details

Occupational Health Service: \_\_\_\_\_

See <http://workwell.ie/contact-list/contact-your-local-occupational-health-service/>

GP Out of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Assistance and Counselling Service Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

See <https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/employee-assistance-programme-contact-details-for-counsellors.pdf>

### Further Information

Further information including frequently asked questions is available at the following link:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/>

Or you can contact the COVID-19 HCW helpdesk – **1850 420 420**  
9am-6pm Mon-Fri;