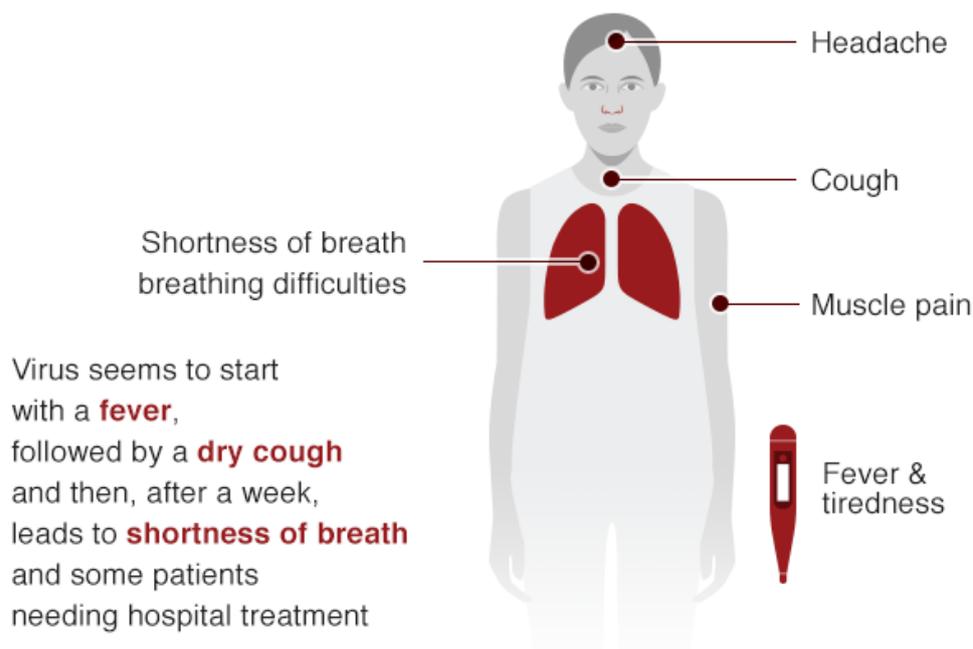


Coronavirus – Covid 19

What are the symptoms?

High temperature (fever); cough and shortness of breath; Some report similar symptoms to pneumonia - 88% of all persons found with the virus had a fever.

Symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19)



Source: WHO

BBC

How to avoid contracting the virus.

Masks – Are they a good idea? If someone is unwell then a mask may be a good step (although if anyone has symptoms they should not be in a public place!). Masks may not be effective against someone picking up a virus. In addition when they are taken off to eat and drink any protection is lost and virus droplets may also lay on the outside of a mask if someone sneezed nearby. Anytime you sneeze do wash your hands.

There are two simple steps. **Wash your hands (thoroughly)**; Do not to come into work if unwell. The virus is thought to remain alive for around six hours on a surface so cleaning surfaces and washing items that are regularly handled should be cleaned. Try and avoid touching your face (the main route in is through your eyes, nose and mouth) and consider not shaking hands for a while. Newcastle United FC have actually banned their players from shaking hands.

Catch it! Bin it! Kill it! – but make sure you tie the bag with tissues. Then wash your hands again.

Hygiene

Hand gels – If you can still get them after the panic buying still ensure they are at least 60 per cent alcohol – Washing your hands with soap and water is more effective. I have attached a poster showing how to properly wash your hands and suggest this be posted in toilets, noticeboards and appropriate places. I recently noticed at a fairly grim service station a person walk out without washing his hands and the proceed to open fridge doors and handle bakery products, I wondered about outing him by shouting “Unclean! Unclean!” – But thought better of it – However perhaps colleagues and friends could gently suggest that people return to the hand wash basin if they see this kind of behaviour. The service station hand drier was broken too and drying your hands is just as important as washing.

Carry out further sanitizing of door handles, taps, flush and frames. Those items that are regularly touched. These may be many and varied and include signing in pens and then there is the issue of business that take in cash.

For four out of five of us the symptoms will be mild and recovery will be one hundred percent. For those who are elderly, vulnerable or have a pre-existing condition then it could be potentially more serious. The clearest way to keep your employees and visitors safe is by regular hand washing.

What should I do if I think I have been infected?

Coronavirus guidance

Advice for people who think they may have coronavirus

- Step one**  Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
- Step two**  Contact NHS 111
- Step three**  You may be asked to self-isolate
- Step four**  Your details may be passed to local health protection teams
- Step five**  You may then be tested for the virus
- Step six**  A doctor or nurse will give you advice on what to do next

When will the vaccine be available!?

This is being worked on but it would appear not available until next year.

Interestingly, only three percent of persons with the virus so far have been children

What to tell your employees

To carry on as normal for the time being but take care and take precautions.

If anyone comes into work unwell particularly with a high temperature they should be sent home immediately. If an employee has a high temperature (one of the main symptoms of the virus) they should **telephone 111 and self-isolate** for two weeks (the average incubation period has been found to be six days). You might consider asking employees to check their temperature on a daily basis prior to coming in to work.

I understand that employees will not want to lose their wages but this will be down to company policy as to what payment is made. Consider organising a staff meeting to explain and reassure your employees.

What to tell customers and visitors

You are still open for business! Have a suitable hand sanitizer on entrance and other key areas of the building and ask them to stay away if unwell or if they are living with people who are unwell with a high temperature. You might consider signage, email or information on your website. This will need to be carefully worded of course.

It is possible that people who are infected are not actually displaying symptoms in the early part of the incubation period but as yet this is not thought likely. This is not hundred percent known as yet.

Should I stay away from large crowds such as sporting events?

If you were on a train or bus and an infected person sneezed or coughed in your direction it's possible that you will catch it (via mouth, eyes, or mouth). However if you are at the other end of the carriage or bus its fairly unlikely to transmit directly.

The thoughts heard from scientists today was that it was less likely to be transmitted in a large outdoor arena of 70'000 than it was in a pub with people watching an event on tv who are in close proximity.

There have been some suggestions that the panic and potential remedies being touted may be worse than the actual virus so the advice is for everyone to remain calm and be sensible. No panic buying please. With a new virus and outbreak there are always unknowns and advice may change. The details within this document are meant as a guide only.

The latest government advice is found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>

If you have any further queries do please let me know. I will endeavour to update at regular intervals. See below for a poster on advice for stopping the virus spreading.

Tim MacWilliam FRSPH. 3rd March 2020

Advice for stopping virus spread



Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use a sanitiser gel



Catch coughs and sneezes with **disposable tissues**



Throw away used tissues
(then wash hands)



If you don't have a tissue
use your sleeve



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands



Avoid close contact with people who are unwell