



Covid-19

The newfound Coronavirus is currently the topic of the world, and as most would say, the world has gone mad for toilet paper and hand sanitiser. It seems all we are talking about globally is that this virus is a killer and the media are soaking every ounce of fear. Well today I'm writing an article to explain to you the facts on the coronavirus from reliable sources such as the World Health Organization, NHS, and Public Health England.

The date of this being written is 19th March 2020. The current amount of cases of the coronavirus worldwide is 227,746 with 9,303 deaths and 85,971 recovered. The virus effects the respiratory system (lungs and airways) and if you find the following symptoms you should self-isolate;

High temperature – Hot chest or back, no need to measure the temperature, if there's a fever there's a chance.

A new continuous cough – as said on the NHS a continuous cough means coughing more regularly or 3 or more coughing episodes within 24 hours, if you usually experience a cough it will be worse than usual.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, please self-isolate for 7 days, but if you live with someone with these symptoms, you need to self-isolate for 14 days from the day the first person in the home began experiencing the symptoms.

If you live with someone who is 70+, pregnant, or has underlaying health problems, such as weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days. For more information visit www.NHS.uk. Remember, self-isolating is there to protect those at risk, you may be fit and healthy with no health problems, but this doesn't mean you should ignore the risk as you could carry the virus and put others at risk.

Unfortunately, there is no current vaccination to protect against Covid-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions such as, washing your hands often and avoiding close contact with those who are sick. There is also no specific treatment for the virus but those who have the virus can seek medical assistance to help relieve symptoms.

In terms of panic buying, you may notice at the moment the shelves have been bare and people are being left without whilst others have more than they need.

Many UK supermarkets are now doing their best to limit the amount you can buy at once so there is enough for everyone. If you follow your local supermarket on twitter, there will be regular updates on how they are tackling the issue.

Asda, M&S, Tesco, Sainsburys, and many more supermarkets have announced from today all stores will be prioritising the elderly and most vulnerable in their first opening hour check with the store to find out more. They have also limited the number of items a person can buy via category to 3. (Example; If you are buying tins of soup, you can only buy 3 tins at a time). Follow your local supermarket to see the latest news on how they are handling this.

Businesses should encourage their employees to work at home wherever possible and frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly using your standard cleaning products.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, **they should be sent home**. Employees **defined vulnerable** should be strongly advised and supported to work from home if possible.

Your employees will need your support to follow the recommended action to stay at home to reduce the coronavirus to others, those who follow the advice to stay at home will be eligible **for statutory sick pay from the first day of their absence**.

Those employees who live with someone who are **defined as vulnerable** should also be advised to **work from home** to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and taking it back to those vulnerable.

The following is quoted directly from the GOV website:

- Employees should take time off work if they are ill. Government is clear that employers should support their staff's welfare, especially during an extended response.
- Employees should take time off work if they're ill.
- By law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness (that is, employees can self-certify). After 7 days, it is for the employer to determine what evidence they require, if any, from the employee.

We continue to urge employers to respect the need to stay at home where they are following government advice to do so and to show flexibility in the evidence they require from employees.

If evidence is required to cover self-isolation or household isolation beyond the first 7 days of absence, then employees can get an isolation note from NHS 111 online or from the NHS website.

The Chancellor has set out a package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19.

This includes a package of measures to support businesses including:

- a Statutory Sick Pay relief package for SMEs
- a 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England
- small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
- grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank
- a new lending facility from the Bank of England to help support liquidity among larger firms, helping them bridge coronavirus disruption to their cash flows through loans
- the HMRC Time To Pay Scheme
- There is no action for you. This will apply to your next council tax bill in April 2020. However, local authorities may have to reissue your bill automatically to exclude the business rate charge. They will do this as soon as possible.
- You can estimate the business rate charge you will no longer have to pay this year using the business rates calculator.
- Further guidance for local authorities is available in the expanded retail discount guidance.

Please be considerate, follow the advice set by the NHS and government and stay safe. For more information and regular updates, check the government website, NHS, and World Health Organization.