

New Government campaign to prevent spread of coronavirus indoors this winter



As we approach winter and inevitably spend more time indoors, we need the public to keep following this important advice to control the spread of the virus. Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty said:

‘Hands. Face. Space’ emphasises important elements of the guidance we want everybody to remember: wash your hands regularly, use a face covering when social distancing is not possible and try to keep your distance from those not in your household.

Following these simple steps could make a significant difference in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 and help protect you and your friends, colleagues and family from the virus.

The compelling evidence combined with expert recommendations around ‘Hands. Face. Space’ includes:

Washing your hands

While coronavirus is not likely to survive for long periods of time on outdoor surfaces in sunlight, it can live for more than 24 hours in indoor environments. Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer, regularly throughout the day will reduce the risk of catching or passing on the virus.

Covering your face

Coronavirus is carried in the air by tiny respiratory droplets that carry the virus. Larger droplets can land on other people or on surfaces they touch while smaller droplets, called aerosols, can stay in the air indoors for at least 5 minutes, and often much longer if there is no ventilation. Face coverings reduce the dispersion of these droplets, meaning if you’re carrying the virus, you’re less likely to spread it when you exhale.

Making space

Transmission of the virus is most likely to happen within 2 metres, with risk increasing exponentially at shorter distances. While keeping this exact distance isn't always possible, remaining mindful of surroundings and continuing to make space has a powerful impact when it comes to containing the spread.

Professor Catherine Noakes, part of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) who specialises in airborne infections said:

Coronavirus is emitted in tiny droplets when we breathe, talk, laugh or cough. Other people can be exposed to these when they are close to someone with the virus or they are in a poorly ventilated room for a long time.

Wearing a face covering prevents most of these droplets from being released into the air, and can also reduce the number of droplets that you are exposed to. That is why wearing a face covering serves as a vital first line of defence against catching and spreading the virus, along with regular and thorough handwashing with soap and water and maintaining a safe distance wherever possible.

The public are encouraged to continue to be vigilant of coronavirus symptoms which include a new continuous cough, high temperature, or a loss or change in your sense of taste or smell. If you or someone you know, displays any symptoms, no matter how mild, please get a free test by calling 119 or visiting [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)