



Contact Tracing: COVID-19

A highly effective way to protect the public from infections like Coronavirus (COVID-19) is through a method called contact tracing.

This is used to prevent the spread of infection, and to provide a rapid response to those who might be newly infected. It is a fundamental part of outbreak control, used by public health everywhere.

Once a patient has tested positive for the virus, work is carried out to identify anyone who has had close contact with them during the time they are considered to have been infectious. Things to understand or consider:

How does contact tracing work?

Those who test positive for coronavirus will speak to a clinician who gathers detailed information on places they visited and people they came into close contact with since they became unwell. This builds a very specific picture of the people who need to be contacted, such as family members, colleagues or friends.

What is close contact?

A close contact can be defined as someone living in the same household, someone who had direct or physical contact with an infected person, or someone who has remained within six feet of the patient for longer than 15 minutes.

People who have passed the patient in the street or in a shop are at very low risk and will not be traced.

What advice is given to close contacts?

Mainly information on what to do if they become unwell or develop certain symptoms.

Why aren't the public told exactly where confirmed cases are?

Patient confidentiality must be protected. People have rights to their own privacy and public services have responsibilities to respect those rights.

How can I reduce my risk of catching coronavirus?

We are still learning about coronavirus, but we know that similar viruses spread through droplets from coughing and sneezing.

Simple actions are most effective to help stop germs spreading:

- **Wash your hands regularly** with soap and water, or use a hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- **Catch a cough or sneeze in a tissue**, then place in the trash and **wash your hands**