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COVID-19 is an illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of virus called coronavirus.

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Preventing the spread of infection

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, everyone should be trying to follow social distancing measures as much as possible. Like seasonal flu, the same public health advice applies for COVID-19: if you cough or sneeze, use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose, throw it away carefully after use, and wash your hands.

The best way to prevent the spread of infections, including COVID-19, is good personal hygiene. This means washing your hands well and often, using soap and water and drying them with paper towels.

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Face coverings

Information on the use of face coverings is available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/face-coverings

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What are the main symptoms of COVID-19?

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); OR
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); OR
- a loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

People may not have all these symptoms or symptoms may be similar to other common respiratory viruses such as a cold or flu.

Please visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-testing for further details.

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Coronavirus weekly and monthly bulletins

The latest weekly and monthly bulletins can be found here

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Public information downloads

Further resources including posters for download and printing are available here.

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