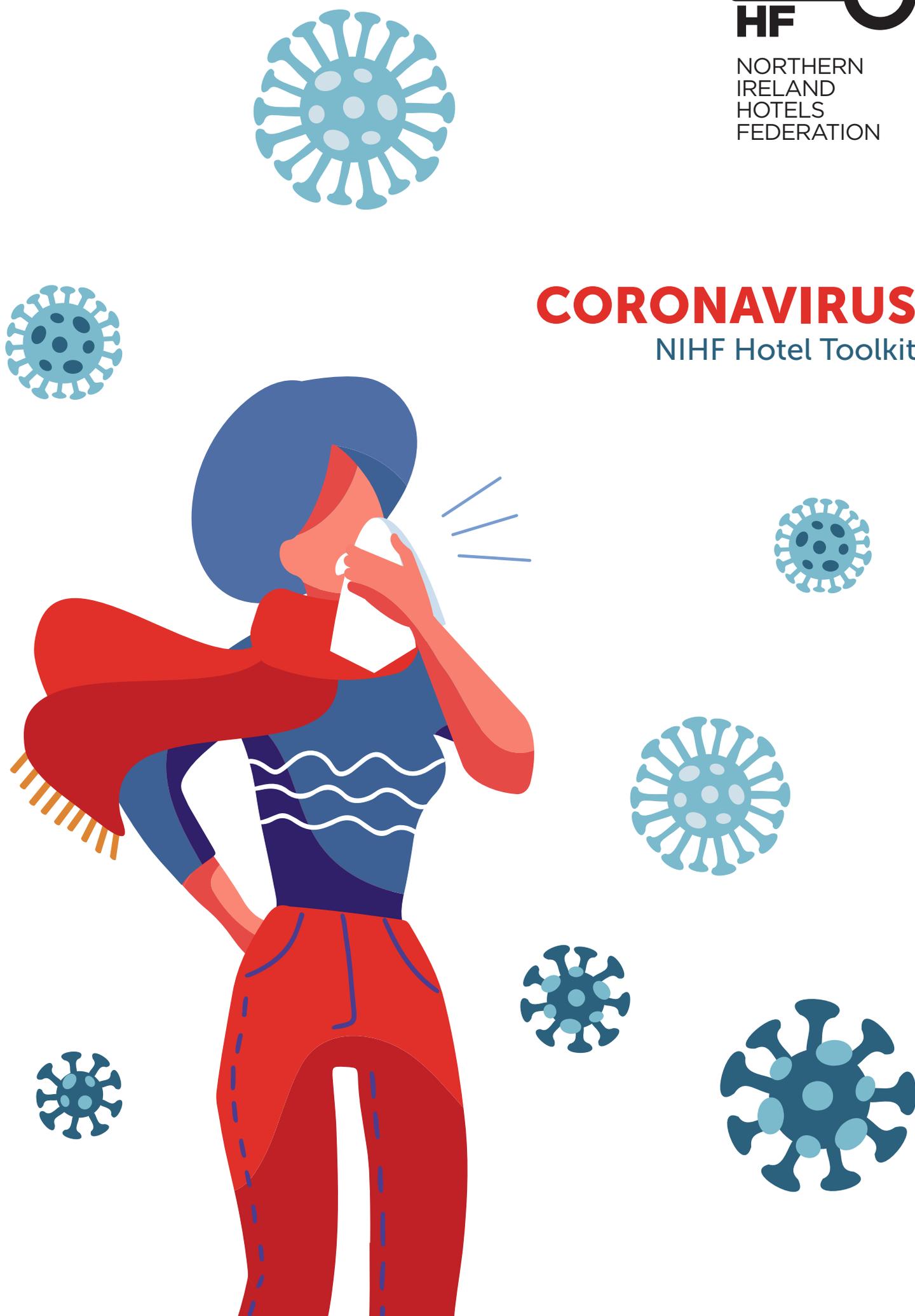




NORTHERN
IRELAND
HOTELS
FEDERATION

CORONAVIRUS

NIHF Hotel Toolkit



Coronaviruses

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses. Some can cause illness in humans.

Coronavirus, or COVID-19 as it is now known, is a respiratory illness which has caused many infections and deaths not only in China, where it originated, but also in other countries around the world. As this is a new disease, we are still learning about it, and so issues such as how long the incubation period could be are uncertain.

Viruses such as flu have been found to survive on surfaces for up to 2 days. People may be carriers of coronavirus and may be in the incubation period where they are not yet showing symptoms but could be shedding the virus, which is why it is appearing in some countries where there is not a known source.

Whilst at time of writing the number of confirmed cases in the UK is low, by being prepared, we could help to reduce the risks if the numbers begin to rise. As the incubation period may be at least 14 days, our statistics may be behind, so adopting prevention measures now may pay dividends.

The good news is that preventive measures are similar to those of other respiratory disease and rely on good basic general and personal hygiene to stop the virus entering the body, which is why the likely routes of transmission need to be considered.

The symptoms of Coronavirus typically include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Pneumonia can develop in patients, which can be particularly dangerous for those who have pre-existing medical conditions or suppressed immune systems.

Guidance for hotels

The enclosed guidance has been collated and researched from various sources. It is intended to assist hotel members in dealing with this issue, but it is not a definitive and comprehensive guide to coronavirus. You should still carry out further research and speak with HR and medical advisors if you need further clarification of responsibilities.

Cancellations

It is very difficult to provide advice on how to handle cancellations of hotel guests. We are waiting on the Government to clarify this matter. At the moment, you should treat each case as it occurs and ask - what is the contract I have with the person? What future business relationship would I like to maintain?

How is it spread?

While we are still learning more about this virus, it appears to spread from infected people through coughing, and through hand contact with contaminated surfaces.

It can take up to 14 days for the symptoms to appear, and during this time, it is possible that a person who has contracted the illness could be contagious.

Preventing the spread

Taking preventive measures means assuming that it is around and taking action accordingly. It is not a waste of time and is actually very cheap to implement the most effective measures, because these involve firstly washing your hands at critical times and second keeping dirty hands away from your face.

Here is a summary of the recommendations:

1. Avoid potential exposure, employ general hygiene measures and safe food practices. Do not touch surfaces that may be contaminated.
2. Avoid direct contact with animals (live or dead) and their environment. Rooms affected by a case of Coronavirus must be cleaned using the virucidal sanitizers, NOT regular sanitizers.
3. Keep some distance from people who are obviously sick.
4. Maintain good personal hygiene - Wash your hands frequently. Carry hand sanitiser for use when soap and water are not readily available. Avoid touching your face.
5. Ensure food is thoroughly cooked, and ensure hands are sanitized after handling raw products.
6. Do not travel if you are sick - note that some locations have implemented screening, and travellers may face quarantine and testing.

General advice for hotel staff

If staff are serving customers, whilst there is no advice to wear masks, normal precautions should be taken to improve handwashing at key times.

The most important thing is to remember the routes of transmission, and to take precautions at key moments. If it is easier, in terms of operation, hand gel can be used on visibly clean hands.

Hand washing

- On arrival at work
- On entering the kitchen
- After clearing a table
- After touching anything that guests may have contaminated

- After touching hand contact surfaces such as handrails, door handles
- Always after using the toilet or going into the toilet areas
- After cleaning
- After cleaning hotel rooms and touching bedding and towels
- After doing any laundry

Disinfection

- In the hotel office, many people could be sharing the phone, keyboard, mouse, and the desk.
- Disinfect these before you sit down using an antimicrobial wipe that has anti-viral properties – look on the label (leave these on the desk). As coronavirus is new, tests have not been done on this yet, but the next best thing is to use those products that claim to kill flu and cold viruses.

Protecting Others

- Always sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm to prevent your hands becoming contaminated.
- If you use a tissue, bin it immediately, and don't leave around on surfaces. Wash your hands or use hand gel afterwards.
- If anyone has flu symptoms such as cough, sneezing, fever, shortness of breath they should not come to work, and if concerned should dial 111 and ask for advice before going to a GP surgery or chemist.

Contingency Planning

- Self-isolation will affect labour and should be considered
- Fit staff may need to be prepared to be on standby for extra rotas

Laundry

- Uniform should be washed at temperatures above 60°C or a laundry sanitizing agent used if the fabrics can't be washed at such a temperature.
- There is more control if laundry is carried out in-house or professionally, rather than staff taking it home.
- Uniform must not be worn on the way to work as it could become contaminated

Face masks

At the moment there is a lot of discussion about how effective these are, and we should await direction from Government health officials about when it may be appropriate for masks to be worn.

If masks are worn, then care needs to be taken not to contaminate yourself when putting them on, or when adjusting them. Remember – hands are the main route of transmission, so you need to wash hands before putting the mask on and if you

take it off and replace it, then make sure you haven't contaminated it in the meantime – because it fits directly on the face – a route of transmission.

Training

Training should be given to ensure that all staff understand the risks, and this need not take long but should include details on route of transmission and the importance of hand washing at key times.

Menus

Menus and other items such as hotel information packs that are used between guests could be a route of transmission, so consider using digital versions, wipe-clean or single use items at this time.

Reception

- Have sanitizer for guests to use on the desk.
- Make sure all reception staff have access to sanitizer behind the desk so that they can use this between serving guests.
- If staff help guests with luggage, they should wash their hands or use a hand gel afterwards.

Housekeeping

- Housekeeping staff could be at risk from picking up the virus left on hand contact surfaces in bedrooms, on linen and towels.
- Hand contact surfaces should be sanitized using a chemical that is effective against respiratory viruses as well as bacteria. You may already have a check list that includes the following:
 - Bedside tables
 - Remote control
 - Taps
 - Flush handles
 - Door handles – inside and out
 - Hair dryer handles
 - Mini bar handle
 - Kettle handle
 - Ideally glasses and crockery should be removed and washed in a dishwasher not the room sink.
 - Linen and bedding should be bagged before leaving the bedroom to reduce any risk of transmission in the corridor
 - It is critical that staff protect themselves by hand washing immediately after cleaning each room or use a sanitizing hand gel.

What should you do if you suspect a case in your hotel?

Report Immediately

If you recognize symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath in yourself, stay at home and notify your manager and local health authority immediately. If you notice a guest displaying these symptoms, the General Manager should be informed and will assess whether it is appropriate to contact local health authorities.

Quarantine

Guests - If a guest is suspected to have Coronavirus, local health authorities should be advised immediately. The guest should stay in their room until further advice is issued by the local health authority. If the guest's illness is confirmed as Coronavirus, then the local health authorities will advise on further measures for quarantine.

Staff - staff who have been in close contact with a guest suspected (or confirmed) as having Coronavirus do not need to be quarantined at this stage, however, if they begin to display symptoms, they should stay at home and the local health authority should be notified immediately to arrange appropriate quarantine and care.

Activate Control Procedures

In the event of a suspected case of Coronavirus in a guest or staff member, control procedures should be activated immediately. These procedures include the deployment of virucidal sanitizers to clean all affected areas, and the use of hand sanitizers to help limit infection. Hotels should maintain a stock of these items.

Respiratory Viral Infection Cleaning Plan

Room Decontamination Procedure

Procedure for decontamination of a room which has been occupied by infected guests or staff (after check-out) as the room should not be entered while the guest is still in the hotel.

PPE to be worn:

- Disposable apron
- Disposable gloves

1. Strip bed, place all linen and pillow cases in soluble linen bags and seal the bags.
2. Remove shower curtain (if material) and bath mat, place in soluble linen bags and seal for laundering.
3. Discard all disposable items e.g. menus, toiletries, toilet roll etc, seal in bin bags.
4. All crockery and glassware should be rewashed with anti-viral sanitizer before being removed and put through the commercial dishwasher.
5. Decontaminate all hard surfaces i.e. chairs and table tops, window frames, dressing tables, bedside tables, wardrobes, telephones, remote controls, door handles, light switches, in room safe, kettle, iron and headboards (if applicable) with anti-viral sanitiser.
6. Ensure the minibar is cleaned i.e. remove items and clean with anti-viral sanitiser.
7. Decontaminate all areas within the bathroom such as the air vents, inside surface of taps, shower heads, handles, towel rails, waste bins and around the cistern of the toilet using a disposable cloth and Anti-viral sanitiser.
8. Mop the bathroom with a mop and bucket (preferably colour coded).
9. The bathroom should then be cleaned as for normal changeover.
10. All cloths, gloves and aprons should be placed in yellow clinical waste bags after use in each room, sealed and disposed of.
11. Open the windows to allow fresh air to enter
12. Once the room has been aired for 24 hours the room can be made up for a normal changeover.

Cleaning Schedule – Room Decontamination

Room No. _____

Area Cleaned	Complete	Name	Signed
Bed stripped – place all linen in soluble linen bags.			
Launder duvet and pillows.			
Remove shower curtain (if material) place in soluble linen bag.			
Discard disposable items e.g. menu cards, toilet roll, toiletries – seal in yellow bin bag.			
All crockery and glassware washed with anti-viral sanitizer and sent to the dishwasher.			
Remove all items from minibar, clean inside and clean items.			
Decontaminate hard surfaces and contact surfaces in bedroom with anti-viral sanitiser.			
Decontaminate hard surfaces and contact surfaces in bathroom with anti-viral sanitiser.			
Mop bathroom floor with mop & bucket.			
Clean the rest of the bathroom as 'normal'.			
All cloths, gloves and aprons – place in yellow clinical waste bag and dispose.			
Open windows to allow 'fresh air' into the room.			

Time room clean finished:

Date _____ Time _____

This room will be ready for use: (Add 24 hours)

Date _____ Time _____

Guest Welfare checklist
(Complete daily during an Outbreak)

Room No. _____

Action Required	Comments
Issue letters to guests to inform/update them of the situation if an outbreak at the hotel.	
Politely encourage guests staying in-house that are exhibiting symptoms to remain in their room until they are symptom free to prevent cross contamination.	
All requests from ill guests should be made via the phone. Have guests been provided with contact names/numbers?	
Any requests from ill guests e.g. room service/linen should be left outside the guest's door for them.	
Ensure clean towels and linen are provided for ill guests via housekeeping/cleaning team.	
Ensure drinking water and food is provided for ill guests.	
Contact family members of guests if required.	
Liaise with medical services if required.	
Make arrangements for longer stay for guests if required.	