

New campaign to prevent spread of coronavirus indoors this winter

- The spread of coronavirus, particularly in enclosed spaces is shown in a new film, produced with experts in the field, which highlights the risk in simple, everyday interactions
- The campaign will run across TV, radio, print, out of home, social and digital display advertising

A new science based public information campaign will be launched ahead of winter to highlight how everyone can help to stop the spread of the virus by remembering to wash their hands, cover their face and make space.

'Hands. Face. Space' will run across TV, radio, print, out of home, social and digital display advertising, as well as on community media channels and will be supported by a variety of public and private sector partners throughout the coming weeks.

As part of this campaign, a new video is being released to show exactly how coronavirus spreads indoors. With people expected to spend more time inside during the winter, the film – produced with the help of scientific experts – encourages the public to follow simple steps to reduce the risk of infection.

Through a scientifically based reconstruction of everyday scenarios the film shows how the interactions between people, surfaces and the air spread the virus. The film also reflects how coronavirus spreads through droplets that come out of our nose and mouth. This is a powerful reminder to the public of the importance of remaining aware of their surroundings and following the guidance.

Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty said:

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.

'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 ([see endnote 1](#)). 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 ([see endnote 2](#)).

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 ([see endnote 3](#)). 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 ([see endnote 4](#)).

Making space

Transmission of the virus is most likely to happen within 2 metres, with risk increasing exponentially at shorter distances ([see endnote 5](#)). 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.

While coronavirus deaths have significantly reduced, the virus is still circulating in communities and impacting people of all ages across the UK. 'Hands. Face. Space' are simple but vital behaviours that have the power to protect the public from both the short and potential long-term impact of coronavirus.

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.

Poppy, 27 from London and suffering from long-term COVID-19 symptoms:

There is a worrying trend at the moment for people who don't consider themselves as being at a high-risk group to be dismissive of how the virus may impact them. Before having coronavirus, I was fit and healthy. Now 6 months after supposedly recovering, I'm still dealing with the aftermath of the virus which affects my everyday life. You really don't know how this will impact you and just because you're not classed as vulnerable – doesn't mean you're not at risk.

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

Background information

Assets

Additional information about the Test and Trace approach

The new NHS Test and Trace service helps identify, contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives. We all have a vital role to play in tackling coronavirus and NHS Test and Trace will help us return life to as close to normal as possible in a way that is safe and avoids a second peak.

If you have coronavirus symptoms you must self-isolate immediately with other members of your household and book a test on the website: nhs.uk/coronavirus or via 119.

Those who have tested positive for coronavirus will be contacted by the service by text, email or phone – and asked to share information about their recent close contacts. Close contacts could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes.

Endnotes

Endnote 1: van Doremalen N, Bushmaker T, Morris DH, et al. Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1. N Engl J Med 2020; 382(16): 1564-7

Endnote 2: Beale S, Johnson A, Zambon M, null n, Hayward A, Fragaszy E. Hand Hygiene Practices and the Risk of Human Coronavirus Infections in a UK Community Cohort [version 1; peer review: 1 approved]. Wellcome Open Research 2020; 5(98).

Endnote 3: A. C. Fears et al., "Persistence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 in Aerosol Suspensions," Emerg. Infect. Dis., vol. 26, no. 9, Sep. 2020, doi: 10.3201/eid2609.201806.

Endnote 4: D. K. Milton, M. P. Fabian, B. J. Cowling, M. L. Grantham, and J. J. McDevitt, "Influenza Virus Aerosols in Human Exhaled Breath: Particle Size, Culturability, and Effect of Surgical Masks," *PLoS Pathog.*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2013, doi: 10.1371/journal.ppat.1003205.

Endnote 5: W. Chen, N. Zhang, J. Wei, H. Yen, and Y. Li, "Short-range airborne route dominates exposure of respiratory infection during close contact," *Build. Environ.*, pp. 1–33, 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.buildenv.2020.106859