FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE

What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new illness that can affect your lungs and breathing. While most people with COVID-19 develop mild or uncomplicated illness, people with certain neurological conditions including Huntington's Disease may be at higher risk of becoming unwell.

Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. To infect somebody, the virus has to get from an infected person's nose or mouth into the eyes, nose or mouth of another person.

What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms to look out for are:

- a new cough
- shortness of breath
- muscle pain
- Fatigue /tiredness
- Fever equal to or above 38 degrees /Chills

How can I tell I have coronavirus if I also have HD?

Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 might seem similar to those of HD – e.g. coughing, shortness of breath. But these symptoms have to cluster together, along with a temperature, to make us suspect that this is COVID19

How do people get coronavirus?

You can contact Covid-19 if you:

- come into close contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing or sneezing
- touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on and bring your unwashed hands to your face (eyes, nose or mouth)

What can I do to protect myself?

Follow the HSE guidelines for **at risk groups and cocooning**

- Avoid contact with anyone who is unwell or has any symptoms of coronavirus.
- Stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact for 2 weeks from 28 March.
- Do not shake hands or hug people
- Do not touch your face with your hands
- Do not go out shopping - ask neighbours, family or friends to help you with shopping and any medicine that you need.
- If you are having food or medicines delivered they should be left outside your door.
- Do not attend any gatherings, including gatherings with family and friends anywhere.
- Keep in touch with family and friends over the phone or online if you have access.
- Keep yourself mobile by getting up and moving as much as possible.
- If you have a garden or balcony, spend time outside for fresh air.
- Do not go outside your home and garden.

- If you need to contact your GP or other services use the phone.
- Make a joint plan with family, friends and neighbours on what to do if you become ill.

Visits from people who provide essential support with your daily needs should continue. These include healthcare, personal support and social care.

What should I do if my prescriptions run out and I cannot contact my GP?
You can call your GP or local clinic, and they should be able to arrange to send a prescription to you and your pharmacy. If you continue to experience problems, you can also contact email advice: **info@huntingtons.ie**

What happens if somebody in my family gets COVID-19?
They should follow the advice of the HSE, and isolate themselves. You should not be in the same room as them. They should if possible use a different bathroom, cooking implements, dishes and cutlery.
All surfaces in the house should be wiped down regularly with disinfectant.
Clothes other items belonging to the infected person should be placed in a plastic bag, and washed at high temperatures.

What happens if I get COVID-19?
It is very important to following the HSE advice about social isolation to protect you from getting coronavirus.
Social isolation works.

If you do develop symptoms, you should **first** call your **GP** or **GP out of hours** service to arrange testing. Information is available via the **HSE helpline 1850 24 1850**. Please bear in mind that GP phone lines and the HSE helpline will be extremely busy at this time, and that it may take some time to get through. The HSE information page provides information:
https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/

You should assume you have the virus until the test come back negative.
If your test is positive, you should rest at home, socially isolate in accordance with the HSE guidelines, and take paracetamol.
Please let us know if you have tested positive so that we can offer support.
 Most people get better.

I cannot attend my GP, and my GP cannot visit me. What should I do?
Please call HDAI on 087 7911716 or 087 051 7772 and we will aim to source neurological advice for you

I am worried that if my family gets sick they won't be able to take care of me
This is a very understandable concern. HADI can assist in sourcing care for you. We can contact the HSE or community and disability supports to help you find care.

I am a carer of somebody with HD. What should I do?

- Follow the HSE guidelines about **restricted movements** and **at risk groups and cocooning**
- Take regular exercise
- Wash your hands frequently
- Wash down surfaces in your living space frequently
- Avoid physical contact with others
- Do not touch your face with your hands
- Make a joint plan with family, friends and neighbours on what to do if you become ill.
- If you think your loved one has developed symptoms of COVID you should call your GP. The GP will decide if testing is required.

What happens if I have outside carers? Do these increase my risks?
- Carers have been educated about spreading COVID-19, and will reduce their risks
- They will not come if they think that they are likely to give you the virus.
- They may wear a mask when they visit you. Do not be alarmed about this.

I have heard that children and young people may be invisible carriers. What should I do about this risk?
- Follow the HSE **stay at home** guidelines
- Children should be taught to wash their hands regularly and avoid touching their face

What else should I think about?
If you haven't already done so, now is an important time to talk to your family about your wishes should you become ill and not be able to speak for yourself. If you have an advanced decision plan you should review this and update it. You should also discuss what might happen should your family members become ill.

We understand that this may be a frightening time for people with HD and their families.

We are working hard to make sure to support you.

HDAI Emergency phone numbers: 087 051 7772   087 7911716

Email **info@huntingtons.ie**

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