

Returning from Travel & New Entry Healthcare Worker Information leaflet

For new entry HCWs and HCWs returning from travel outside of the island of Ireland

V16, 19th July 2021

PLEASE NOTE: Because the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus in the human population, new information is becoming available as doctors and scientists study the virus and how it affects people. While the information contained in this pack was accurate at the time it was printed, we advise you to check the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website at www.hpsc.ie for the most up-to-date information. The HPSC website is updated frequently as new information about the COVID-19 becomes available.

Please read this letter and the enclosed information leaflets carefully.

Because you have travelled from outside of the island of Ireland, you must follow current national guidance (see - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b4020-travelling-to-ireland-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>). You are now excluded from work and must follow government guidance for travel.

Travelling from ‘Designated States’ /Countries to which an ‘Emergency Brake’ has been applied

HCWs who have travelled from ‘designated states’ should follow advice on mandatory quarantine as outlined on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b4020-travelling-to-ireland-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/#designated-states-mandatory-hotel-quarantine>. Your quarantine will come to an end on receipt of a written negative test result, taken no earlier than day 10 post travel.

However, if you are ‘fully vaccinated’ with an approved vaccine and have the documentation proof of this, you do not have to complete mandatory hotel quarantine on arrival in Ireland. (Information on this and a description of ‘**Fully vaccinated**’ is outlined here - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3b8e1-mandatory-hotel-quarantine-your-questions-answered/#exemptions-from-mandatory-hotel-quarantine>). You must then complete the period of self-isolation at home or in the place specified in your passenger locator form. Your quarantine will come to an end on receipt of a day 5 written negative test results. For those quarantining at home, information on quarantine requirements following travel from a ‘designated state’ is available here - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation/how-to-self-isolate.html>.

With written confirmation of the test results as above you may then return to work.

Travelling from Non-Designated States/Countries to which an ‘Emergency Brake’ has not been applied

HCWs travelling from non-designated states who are not fully vaccinated or with no confirmed COVID 19 infection within the previous 9 months must quarantine at home or in the place specified in the passenger locator form. Information on quarantine requirements following travel from a ‘non-designated state’ is available here - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/managing-coronavirus-at-home/if-you-live-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus.html>

These HCWs may be able to exit quarantine on receipt of a negative test result, taken no earlier

than day 5 post travel. With written confirmation of the test result you may then return to work.

HCWs coming from these countries who are fully vaccinated or who have confirmed infection within the previous 9 months do not have to quarantine or be tested. They can return to work.

Self-care:

These restrictions can be a source of stress for some people. Many things may help you cope better with the period of monitoring:

- **Set goals:** Setting goals and achieving them can give you a sense of control. The goals must be realistic in the given circumstances and could include writing a diary or learning new skills.
- **Keep active:** Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, develop mind games to stimulate thinking, for example, remember the plots of movies or passages from books. The possibilities are unlimited.
- **Look for or inject humour into the situation:** Even smiling and laughing inwardly can provide relief from anxiety and frustration.
- **Eat sufficiently and exercise as much as possible:** This will help keep the body strong and counteracts the physical effects of stress.
- **Actively use stress management techniques:** Physical relaxation techniques can reduce stress levels and are useful methods to manage pain and emotional turmoil. Most people are familiar with stress management techniques but not all use them in practice; however, this is the time to the use of such techniques.
- **Accept feelings:** Being in a stressful situation can cause a lot of different emotional reactions like anger, frustration, anxiety, regrets, second-guessing yourself, self-blame etc. These feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. (See EAP details for further support).

What happens next?

During the period of quarantine and for 14 days following your return from travel, please self-monitor yourself for the following respiratory symptoms (**Fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss or change in sense of smell or taste and also milder respiratory symptoms such as sore throat or runny nose**).

If you develop any potential symptoms:

Self-isolate immediately

- a. **Do not attend** your GP, including their out-of-hours/on-call service or local Emergency Department unless told to do so by Public Health or GP.
- b. You should phone your GP and identify yourself as a symptomatic returning healthcare worker.
- c. If acutely unwell you may need to contact the ambulance service. (**Please check local GP /GP out of hours contact details and add below**).

If you are tested for coronavirus and the result is negative, you should still complete your allocated quarantine in line with government guidance. If test results indicate you have COVID-19, please let your manager and Occupational Health Service know, as you will need to start self-isolation from the date symptoms began. (**See below link for contact numbers**).Your GP will advise re medical management.

Contact Details:

- GP Service: _____
- GP Out of Hours service: _____
- Employee Assistance and Counselling Service Contact Details: _____

See <https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/employee-assistance-programme-contact-details-for-counsellors.pdf>

- Occupational Health Service: _____

See <http://workwell.ie/contact-list/contact-your-local-occupational-health-service/>

Further Information

Government travel advice, including up to date information on designated states is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b4020-travelling-to-ireland-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

For further information regarding mandatory hotel quarantine see <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3b8e1-mandatory-hotel-quarantine-your-questions-answered/>

Guidance on the 'Derogation for the return to work of Healthcare Workers (HCW) who have been advised to restrict their movements BUT are identified as essential for critical service' is available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/covid-19-guidance/derogation-for-the-return-to-work-of-healthcare-workers.pdf>

An overview of information for HCWs travelling from abroad is available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/covid-19-guidance/quick-guide-for-healthcare-worker-management1.pdf>

Frequently asked questions regarding COVID-19 are available following link: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/>

Or you can contact the **HSE COVID Helpline** on **1800 700 700**.
8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday.