Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What is coronavirus or COVID-19?

Coronavirus is a type of virus. There are many types of coronaviruses and some cause mild illness like the common cold. The "new or novel coronavirus" originated in China at the end of last year and causes a respiratory disease called COVID-19.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms include fever, coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath. But if you have these symptoms it does not necessarily mean that you have Coronavirus (COVID-19). The symptoms are similar to other illnesses such as cold and flu.

Could my symptoms be Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

It is very unlikely to be coronavirus if you have not been in close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus or have not travelled to certain parts of the world https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk

What should I do if I think I have Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do next (https://111.nhs.uk/service/covid-19). Do not go to your GP practice, hospital or pharmacy.

How is Coronavirus (COVID-19) spread?

Because it is a new virus it is not yet known exactly how it spreads from person to person. However it is very likely that it spreads in the same way as other respiratory illnesses such as the flu. This means that it spreads via droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

How do I avoid getting it?

The best way to reduce your risk of catching coronavirus is to wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water, cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then put the tissue in the bin, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth if your hands are not clean.

Should I wear a face mask?

There is very little evidence that wearing a face mask is of much benefit for the general public. Facemasks are only effective if they are worn correctly, changed frequently and removed and disposed of safely which can be difficult to do outside of a healthcare setting. The best way to protect yourself is to wash your hands frequently with hot water and soap.

I think someone at my child's nursery or school has just come back from one of the affected areas should I take my child out of school?

No, your child should continue to go to school as normal.

I think I've been in contact with someone with Coronavirus (COVID-19) what should I do?

Health professionals from Public Health England will be contacting all people who have been in contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus to provide advice.

But call 111 for advice if you think you have been in close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus in the UK or overseas.

Have there been any cases in Blackburn with Darwen?

So far there have been no confirmed cases of coronavirus in Blackburn with Darwen and only five in the North West of England. It is likely however that in the coming weeks and months there will be cases and we are planning for this.

What is Blackburn with Darwen Council doing to prepare for Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The council is working closely with our partners in the NHS and Public Health England. We have robust systems in place if and when a case of coronavirus is notified to us by PHE. We are also ensuring our schools have been sent the latest public health guidance.

Can I catch Coronavirus (COVID-19) from a package or mail that has shipped from China?

There is currently no evidence that you can catch coronavirus from parcels and mail. Coronaviruses are generally spread by respiratory droplets and how long the virus can survive will depend on a number of factors including the temperature, exposure to sunlight, type of surface etc. It is unlikely that a virus will survive outside the body for longer than 48 hours.

Is there a vaccine for coronavirus?

There is currently no vaccine for the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Where can I get the latest travel advice?

For the latest advice go to https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Where can I get more health advice?

Please visit the NHS website: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/ or the government website for the latest advice https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

Advice for stopping virus spread

Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use a sanitiser gel

Catch coughs and sneezes with **disposable tissues**

Throw away used tissues (then wash hands)

If you don't have a tissue **use your sleeve**

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands

Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Source: NHS

BBC