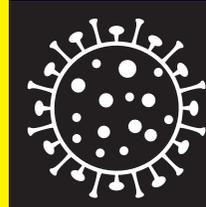


Information for Pavee Mothers and Babies



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice



Photo: Derek Spiers

Congratulations on your new arrival

We know lots of Traveller women are very worried about themselves and their babies during this time. This leaflet has some information and key steps you can take to keep yourself and your baby safe.

Is my baby at a higher risk of getting COVID-19?

If you and your baby are healthy, you are not at a higher risk of getting COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Babies with certain medical conditions, such as SCID or Hurlers, can become very ill if they get the virus.

If you have the virus, you can give it to your baby and to other people. Babies and children don't seem to get very sick with COVID-19. But they can spread it to other people.

COVID-19 spreads when someone coughs or sneezes. The drops from their nose or mouth can fall onto surfaces or be breathed in by someone else.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

What should I be looking out for?

Call your GP straight away if:

You have any of these symptoms:



a high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or higher



a new constant cough



a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste



shortness of breath and breathing difficulties

Not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms.

Your baby has any of these symptoms:

- is under 3 months old and has a high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or higher
- is very pale, skin is blotchy and feels unusually cold when you touch it
- has problems breathing – the baby has to work hard to breathe, or pauses between breaths, or you can hear a grunting noise
- is becoming very restless or unresponsive (doesn't respond to you) or does not seem their usual self
- is going blue round the lips
- has a fit or seizure
- has a rash that does not disappear when you press a glass against it

You or your baby have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19

You and your baby will need to restrict your movements in any of the above situations.

See page 5.

If you need to talk to your GP, phone them. Don't go to the GP surgery. Don't wait until you feel sick to phone your GP. Call them straight away if you have any of these symptoms or been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

If your baby becomes very unwell quickly, they need to see a doctor. It's rare that they have COVID-19. Their symptoms may be because of another illness.

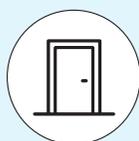
- Phone 999 or 112 if your baby is under 3 months old and has a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or more).
- If your baby is aged 3 to 6 months and has a high temperature, phone your GP urgently.

How do I keep my baby and myself safe?



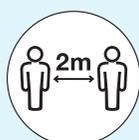
1. Washing hands

- The best way to protect yourself is to wash your hands often. Wash your baby's hands often too. Use soap and water on your baby's hands. Don't use alcohol-based hand gel on their hands. Keep it out of children's reach.
- Wash your hands really well with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser for about 20 seconds. (Sing Happy Birthday twice or say the Our Father once really slowly.) If you are using hand sanitiser check the bottle to see that it has at least 60% alcohol to make sure it works.
- Wash your hands before leaving home and after being outside and near other people.
- Wash your hands after changing your baby's nappy.



2. Stay at home as much as possible and avoid gatherings

- Only go out if you have to or for exercise.
- Avoid gathering in groups, where possible. Family gatherings such as weddings and funerals can be a source of spread of COVID-19.



3. Stay well away (6 feet) from others

- Keep at least 6 feet (2 metres) away from other people when you leave home.
- Wear a face covering if you feel that it's hard to keep apart, especially if you are near older or sick people.



4. If you are going shopping or using public transport, you must wear a face covering (mask)

- If you find it difficult to wear a face covering, it's okay to wear a full face visor or face shield instead. They are not as good as wearing a face covering, but you'll still get some level of protection.



5. Keep plenty of bleach around and make sure to wipe down all surfaces in your home

- Keep all the things you touch clean. COVID-19 can live on surfaces such as door handles, handrails, taps and the toilet flush.
- Wear rubber gloves when you are cleaning. Wash the gloves afterwards and then wash your hands when you take them off.
- Keep bleach out of children's reach.



6. Don't touch your face with your hands

- You can get the virus by touching a surface and then putting your hands on your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Try not to touch your face before you've washed your hands.



7. Cover your mouth with a clean tissue when you're coughing or sneezing

- Put used tissues into a closed bin. Cough or sneeze into your elbow if you don't have a tissue.



What about visitors after the baby comes home?

Bringing a new baby home is a big event for Travellers. Your family will want to call around to see how you're doing. But it's really important that you follow the latest Government advice on visitors to your home.

We have to be very careful at a time like this with the virus still spreading. COVID-19 can spread so easily from person to person. Remember, not everyone shows signs or symptoms, so keep a distance of 6 feet from visitors to keep your baby and yourself safe.

What about the baptism?

Baptism is really important for Travellers. But by not coming together in groups, we can stop the spread of the virus. Your priest will be able to talk to you about baptising your baby.

For more information call:

- Your local Parish
- Parish of the Travelling People: 01 838 8874

Should I go out for walks?

- Fresh air and exercise is good for you during this time. When out walking, try to keep a good distance from other people. Wash your and your baby's hands before you go out and as soon as you get back.

What will happen if I have COVID-19?

You will need to self-isolate and phone your GP if you have symptoms of COVID-19

Self-isolating means:

- staying at home and not having anyone visit you
- keeping away from other people in your home as much as you can – at least 6 feet apart if possible
- wearing a face covering (mask) when you are near other people in your home. A face covering gives more protection than a visor
- asking your family to stay at home but in a separate room if possible. They need to restrict their movements (see information below)
- staying in another room with the windows open if you can. If this isn't possible, make sure to stay as far away as possible from others
- use a separate toilet if you have one. If you don't, use it after other people and clean the toilet and the door handles with bleach after you've used it
- not sharing a bed, toilet or bathroom if possible. Clean areas you've touched with bleach
- not sharing food, plates, drinking glasses, cups, knives, forks and spoons, towels, dishcloths and bedding with other people. Wash these items well with hot soap and water after use
- making sure you have enough bins to dump used tissues



Only stop self-isolating when:

- you have had no fever for 5 days, and
- it has been 10 days since you first had symptoms and you have had no fever for 5 days

Family members need to stay at home

People who live with you will have to restrict their movements if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for it. This means they need to stay at home and avoid other people. They will need to follow advice from their GP and the Traveller Community Health Workers.

What if I can't self-isolate?

Local authorities are responsible for making sure that Travellers have proper facilities. These include toilets, water and bins, especially during self-isolation. If you need support to safely self-isolate, contact your:

- Local authority
- Local Traveller organisation
- Traveller Primary Health Care Project / Traveller Health Unit

What will happen if I have COVID-19, but not the baby?

If you want to keep looking after your baby or can't get someone else in your family to look after them, you should:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or hand sanitiser (with more than 60% alcohol). Do this before and after feeding, bathing and cuddling your baby
- wash your hands after changing their nappy
- wear a face covering (mask) when you are around the baby
- don't cough or sneeze around the baby
- don't be kissing the baby on the face, especially the eyes, nose or mouth
- don't touch the baby's face if you haven't washed your hands
- keep the baby's cot at least 6 feet away from you when you're sleeping

Feeding your baby if you have COVID-19 or symptoms of the virus



Breastmilk is the best milk for your baby.

If you have symptoms of the virus or confirmed COVID-19, it is safe to keep breastfeeding.

To prevent passing it onto your baby, make sure you:

- wash your hands before touching your baby
- sterilise any breast pump or bottles you use
- wear a face covering (mask) when breastfeeding if available

Ask your GP or public health nurse about any medicines that you're taking to make sure it's safe for the baby.

If you are **bottle-feeding**, keep sterilising the bottles. Wash your hands before and after you touch them. If someone else is feeding the baby, make sure they wash their hands too before and after.

Getting a test for you or your baby

Your GP will organise a test for you and your baby if needed. If your baby needs to be tested, a nasal swab will be done. The swab is a type of cotton bud and the tester will place it inside both nostrils to get a sample. For children under the age of two, the swab will only go 1 cm deep. The test is easy and quick.

If your test comes back positive, it's very important you tell your family and anyone else you've been around. It's nothing to be ashamed of and by telling people they can also check if they have symptoms.



Getting worse

Phone your doctor or out-of-hours doctor immediately if you get worse and you:

- start feeling very unwell. Particularly if your breathing changes, becomes difficult, or your cough gets worse
- feel that you are getting increasingly short of breath

If you are short of breath and cannot reach your doctor, call 112 or 999.

What happens if my baby has COVID-19?

If your baby tests positive for COVID-19, you'll be asked to self-isolate them. You will need to wear a face covering (mask) whenever you are with the baby. You will need to make sure to wash your hands before and after touching the baby. Follow the self-isolating guidelines as much as possible on page 5.

If your baby has COVID-19 and isn't getting any better, call your GP right away if:

- they have a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or higher)
- they have a rash
- they are getting sicker
- they have swelling in hands and feet – the skin looks red and hard
- their lips, mouth and tongue are dry, cracked, peeling, swollen or bleeding
- they have swelling or redness in the whites of their eyes



Anything else I should know about me or my baby?

This is a very stressful time but your GP and public health nurse are there to help. If your baby does not have COVID-19 nor any symptoms make sure to keep up their normal appointments. This includes needles and development checks.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or you have been in contact with someone who has it, please don't go to your GP in person. Phone them instead.

Always call your GP or public health nurse if you have any other worries about your baby, including:

- feeding (including vomiting a lot)
- not gaining weight
- temperature
- feeling drowsy
- fussy
- crying a lot for a long time
- sick
- not peeing
- their jaundice (yellow skin) gets worse

Don't wait.

More information

- www.paveemothers.ie/covid-19-coronavirus/
- www.paveepoint.ie/covid-19-information-resources/
- www.hse.ie/coronavirus

Contact:

- Local Traveller Primary Health Care Project
- Local Traveller Organisation
- Traveller Health Unit
- GP
- Public Health Nurse
- Chemist
- Text/call: Traveller COVID-19 helpline 083 1006300;
open 7 days a week from 9am to 9pm

