

# PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

## Information for people at the highest risk from COVID-19

Everyone should be doing what they can to protect themselves and others from the COVID virus by following the public health guidance.

There are no longer Government regulations that say everyone **has to** wear a mask in places such as shops and public transport, or keep social or keep to other restrictions. But everyone is still recommended to wear a mask on public transport and people at highest risk are still recommended to take steps to help keep safe.

You can find information on the conditions that put someone at high risk at the following link <https://bit.ly/3t0O7if>

Many people, especially people with conditions that put them at high risk, are feeling anxious about getting back to normal and wondering how to keep safe. It is harder now to take precautions and limit what you would like to do when other people are getting back to normal but the things you have been doing all along to protect your health can still work to keep you safer as the country and people around you move towards a normal way of living.

It is good to keep active and look after your general health. A healthy way of life improves your chance of recovery if you get COVID-19.

Remember if your immune system does not work very well (if you are immunocompromised) you need an extra doses of vaccine. That fourth dose is your booster dose.

Some other things you can do to keep risk of infection with COVID, influenza and other infections as low as possible are:

- Try to avoid crowded indoor spaces. If you have to be in a crowded space, wear a medical grade or respirator face mask. Respirator masks are often referred to as FFP2 masks.
- Always practice hand hygiene.
- Continue to social distance where possible.
- If you see someone coughing or sneezing, move away if you can

### Safety at home

There is almost no chance of you catching COVID-19 at home if people who are infectious with COVID-19 do not come to your home. It is usually not practical for people in a family household to avoid contact with each other at home. If everyone in the household is vaccinated (including booster) and careful when out of the house that helps to keep you safe.

Try to keep the number of people who come into your house to visit, work or provide healthcare to a small number of trustworthy people. Then you can feel safe at home and you can relax there.

Check that anyone who comes to the house is well when they arrive (no symptoms of COVID-19). Ask them to clean their hands when they arrive, to wear a medical grade or respirator mask and to keep some distance from you whenever possible.

It is important that you continue to use the healthcare services you need. It is OK to ask or remind healthcare workers about precautions.

You can tell people who provide services to you that you need to be extra careful to avoid COVID-19. They will usually try to fit you in at a quiet time and be extra careful when providing you with the service

If you have an appointment with your GP or at a hospital or clinic is it important to attend.

### **New medication**

Some new medicines are becoming available for early treatment of some people with COVID-19. Most people who catch COVID don't need these early treatments. The early treatment is important for some immunocompromised people and for some people who have not taken the vaccine.

Early treatment needs to start within 5 days of COVID-19 symptoms starting. People who might benefit from these treatments need to contact their doctor early. [Sotrovimab](#) is one of these treatments for early COVID-19 and is now in use in Ireland.

If you are immunocompromised or if you have not had the vaccine and you get symptoms that might be COVID-19 call your GP or other doctor who is seeing you regularly. They will be able to tell you if you might benefit from this early treatment

### **Keep in touch**

Talking on the phone or by video link is safe and is a good way to keep in touch. Stay in touch with friends and family. If you need help for any reason there are a number of places you can go for help including:

#### **a) HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams**

(<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/elderabuse/protect-yourself/safeguardprotectteams.html> ).

b) **SAGE** (1850 71 94 00 from 8 in the morning until 10 at night) [www.sageadvocacy.ie](http://www.sageadvocacy.ie).

c) **ALONE** (0818 222 024 from 8 in the morning until 8 at night) [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie).

d) The **HSE Confidential Recipient** is at 1890 1000 14.

e) **Alzheimer Society of Ireland** 1800 341 341 ([www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)).

f) If you need medical assistance call your GP or in an emergency call 112 or 999 g) **Family Carers Ireland** 1800 240724. (<https://www.familycarers.ie/media/1986/familycarers-ireland-emergency-plan.pdf>).