CORONAVIRUS AWARENESS

Please note, this course was developed and is accurate as of March 2020. For up to date information, please visit the [World Health Organisation](#) *website.*

With the increasing news coverage surrounding the latest coronavirus outbreak affecting communities across the world, it's essential to avoid misinformation and remain alert and aware, by equipping yourself with the correct knowledge to help minimise the spread of the virus.

This newest strain of coronavirus causes the disease COVID-19 which initially attacks the lungs and airways, similar to the effects of the influenza virus.

According to the World Health Organisation, common symptoms of the illness include a cough, high temperature and tiredness. It's important to remember that displaying these symptoms does not necessarily mean you have the illness, but awareness is essential to identify and minimise the risk.

Most people eventually recover without needing special medical treatment. However, the disease has a more serious effect on vulnerable people such as the elderly and those with weaker immune systems or underlying health conditions like diabetes, heart disease or respiratory problems.

In more serious cases, the disease can cause difficulty breathing. In a small percentage of cases, this coronavirus has proven fatal. However, according to global reports children seem less affected by the disease.

The virus is transmitted from person to person or onto shared surfaces or objects by means of tiny droplets spread through coughing or sneezing. With that in mind, let's look at what we can do to help minimise the spread of the infection.

Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Where this isn't possible, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser until you are able to wash your hands properly.

If you find yourself sneezing or coughing, be sure to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and dispose of it in a bin immediately after use.

When no tissue is available, use your sleeve or the crook of your arm instead of your hand, and try to avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth without washing your hands first.

It's important to regularly clean and disinfect surfaces and shared items, both at home and at work.

If you believe that you are displaying symptoms, then it's important to reduce the risk of spreading infection by staying home and limiting physical contact with other people. Follow the up to date medical guidance available on healthcare websites. Be aware that every health authority will have a different approach to testing.

If you are asked by a medical professional to isolate yourself, make sure to inform your manager using the agreed channels and remain in contact so that your employer can provide an appropriate level of support. It may be possible for you to arrange to work remotely, and if so, this should be discussed with your manager.

Remember, the most important step you can take is to remain aware and take precautions to protect yourself and those around you. Together, we can work to prevent the spread and effects of the coronavirus.