

**From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride**

HSS(MD) 8/2020



FOR ACTION

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social Care Board/HSC Trusts/ NIAS
GP Medical Advisers, Health & Social Care Board
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward distribution to practice staff)
OOHs Medical Managers (for onward distribution to staff)

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST BT4 3SQ

Tel: I&S

Email: michael.mcbride@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 8/2020

Date: 25 February 2020

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST

Dear Colleague

UPDATED ADVICE IN RELATION TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (Covid-19)

Action Required

Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all clinical staff to enable them to respond accordingly

The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners and OOH facilities immediately.

1. This letter updates the advice sent on 7 February 2020 contained in HSS(MD)07/2020, see attached link <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hss-md-07-2020.pdf>
2. Based on the World Health Organization's declaration that this is a public health emergency of international concern, the UK Chief Medical Officers had raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. This permits the government to plan for all eventualities. The risk to individuals remains low.

Update on returning travellers

3. Based on the scientific advice of the [Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies \(SAGE\)](#) the UK Chief Medical Officers are advising anyone who has travelled to the UK from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days and is experiencing cough or fever or shortness of breath, to stay indoors, self-isolate and contact

their GP who will arrange testing or if it is a medical emergency, call 999 and inform the call handler about their recent travel, even if symptoms are mild.

4. If any individual has returned from the areas listed below **since February 19th and develop symptoms**, however mild, they should stay indoors, self-isolate and contact their GP who will arrange testing or if it is a medical emergency, call 999 and inform the call handler about their recent travel.

- Northern Italy (defined by a line above, and not including, Pisa, Florence and Rimini),
- Iran
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar

5. If any individual has returned from the following specific areas since **February 19**, they are being advised to call the dedicated Covid-19 helpline on 0300 200 7885, stay indoors and self-isolate even if they do not have symptoms:

- Iran
- Specific lockdown areas in Northern Italy as designated by the Government of Italy
- Special care zones in South Korea as designated by the Government of the Republic of South Korea
- Hubei province (returned in the past 14 days)

6. As you will appreciate this is a fast moving and changing situation and the list of affected areas will be kept under review. Clinicians are advised to check the following website to see the most up-to-date information on the situation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>

7. For health professionals, please refer to the attached primary and secondary care flow charts as required as well as the Trusts' single points of contact details. For health protection related queries, the health protection team at the Public Health Agency can be contacted via the Duty Room, on 0300 555 0119, or out-of-hours via ambulance control on 028 90404045.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer

Circulation List

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)
Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts
Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB
Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads*)
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives*)
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts
RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)
Medicines Management Pharmacists, HSC Board (*for cascade to prescribing advisers*)
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust
Professor Donna Fitzsimons, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery QUB
Professor Sonja McIlpatrick, Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster
Caroline Lee, CEC
Donna Gallagher, Open University
Professor Paul McCarron, Head of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, UU
Professor Carmel Hughes, Head of School, School of Pharmacy, QUB
Professor Colin Adair, Director of the NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development, QUB
Joe Brogan, Assistant Director of Integrated Care, HSCB

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>