

What is social distancing and why is it important?

Social distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people.

Social distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

So, the more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

What is everyone being asked to do?

As of 7th April 2020, everyone is currently being advised to maintain good social distancing.

This means not coming within 2 metres of other people who **do not live** with you. Assuming that none of you have any symptoms (and are not on the moderate or high risk groups) then you do not currently need to maintain social distancing within your household although you should be taking sensible precautions such as regular hand washing and wiping down of common touch areas such as light switches and toilet flushes. If you are returning from contact outside of your household, such as coming home from work, then you need to wash your hands and change your clothes (washing the work related clothes at a minimum of 60 degrees) on arriving home.

If you have children who regularly transfer between two households then this should be kept to a minimum but is still allowed. If anyone in one of the households becomes symptomatic then the children should remain in whichever household they are currently in until the 14 days self-isolation period has ended.

What can I do?

If you are sick, stay away from others – that is the most important thing you can do.

You should also practise good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, and
- if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay at least 2metres from people).

As well as these, you can start a range of social distancing and low cost hygiene actions now. These simple, common sense actions help reduce risk to you and to others. They will help to

slow the spread of disease in the community – and you can use them every day – in your home, workplace and while out in public for essentials.

Social distancing at home

Households

To reduce the spread of germs:

- As mentioned, practise good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene
- Avoid handshaking and kissing
- Regularly disinfect high touch surfaces, such as tables, kitchen benches and doorknobs
- Increase ventilation in the home by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning
- Visit shops sparingly
- Consider whether outings and travel, both individual and family, are sensible and necessary

Households where people are ill* (in addition to the measures above)

*“Ill” person refers to someone with an undiagnosed respiratory illness or fever, who is not yet under investigation for COVID-19 but nevertheless could be an unrecognised case

- Care for the sick person in a single room if possible
- Keep the number of carers to a minimum
- Keep the door to the sick person’s room closed and, if possible, a window open
- If available unwell people should use a separate bathroom and bedroom
- Protect other vulnerable family members, such as people over 65 years or people with a chronic illness, including, if practicable, finding alternative accommodation

Social distancing in the workplace

To reduce the spread of germs in the workplace:

- Stay at home if you are sick
- Stop handshaking as a greeting
- Hold meetings via video conferencing or phone call
- Defer large meetings
- Promote good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and provide methods for hand washing for all staff
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly
- Consider opening windows and adjusting air conditioning for more ventilation
- Limit food handling and sharing of food in the workplace
- Reconsider non-essential business travel
- Consider if large gatherings can be rescheduled, staggered or cancelled

Social distancing in public

To reduce the spread of germs:

- Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others
- Sanitise your hands wherever possible, including entering and leaving buildings
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- Public transport workers and taxi drivers should open vehicle windows where possible, and regularly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces

More information and keeping updated on the latest

For the latest advice and information, go to <https://fig.gov.fk/covid-19>