

4. Active Follow-Up of Close Contacts of a person with COVID-19



What is active follow-up?

Active follow-up (also known as active surveillance) is a daily text message to all close contacts of a person who has tested positive with COVID-19. For the 14 days from the last date of contact with the person has tested positive with COVID-19, the HSE Contact Tracing Team will send a text message to a close contact to (i) remind them of the importance of restricted movements (ii) check if they have any symptoms related to COVID-19 and (iii) if so, advise them to contact their G.P. or the HSE Contact Tracing Team. All close contacts will be referred for coronavirus testing, whether they have symptoms or not. For more information, please [click here](#).

Why is the HSE conducting active follow-up?

Close contacts of people who have been diagnosed as having coronavirus have a higher risk of developing the virus than other people in the general population. The purpose of active follow-up is to interrupt the chain of transmission by reminding people who are close contacts of people with COVID-19 of the need for restricted movements, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Active follow-up also provides advice and refers people who develop symptoms for coronavirus testing as quickly as possible.

Why are close contacts asked to restrict their movements?

Close contacts are asked to restrict their movements for 14 days from the last date of contact with the person who has tested positive with COVID-19, as they may develop symptoms at any point up to day 14. A person may be infectious 48 hours prior to the development of symptoms. At the start of their symptoms, the person can be highly infectious. The 14 days of restricted movement is to stop other people, particularly older people and people with an underlying health condition in the community, from catching coronavirus from a close contact before they realise they are ill with COVID-19. It is also important to practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene at all times, but even more so when you are a close contact.

How does active follow-up work?

The person will receive a text message every day from the HSE Contact Tracing Team with the following information:

- Asking the person if they have symptoms, such as: fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of sense of smell or taste;
- Advising the person to contact their GP or contact the HSE Contact Tracing Team if the person does have symptoms; and
- Reminding them how many days the person needs to continue restricting their movements.

If the person develops symptoms, they will be referred for coronavirus testing and they will continue to receive the daily text message.

What if the close contact receives a positive result?

If the close contact receives a positive test result, they will receive the appropriate advice and contact tracing will commence as they are now a person with confirmed COVID-19 and active follow-up will cease.

What if the person receives a not detected result?

If the test is returned as COVID-19 not detected, the person should continue to self-isolate until 48 hours after symptoms have resolved. Thereafter, they will be asked to continue to restrict their movements for the remainder of the 14 days. This is because, even though the test result is not detected, the person may still develop COVID-19 symptoms anytime up to 14 days after the last date of contact with someone who has been diagnosed with coronavirus. If the person develops new symptoms before day 14, testing will again be arranged.