

IPC Matters

Infection Prevention and Control

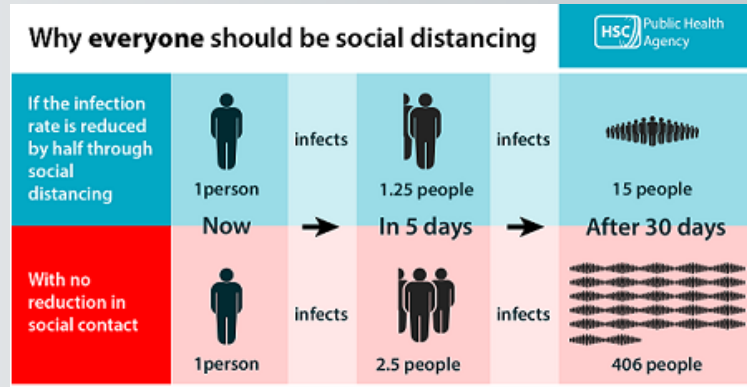


Social distancing and COVID-19

One of the most simple things that everyone can do to help to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is in relation to Social Distancing. Social distancing, better termed physical distancing, is a simple but effective way of reducing the risk of either picking up or spreading infection. It has been a practical step in the IPC toolbox for a long time and does not just relate to managing the spread of COVID-19. It is though, particularly useful to us at the present time and as an aid for helping to try to control the spread of COVID-19.

Social or physical distancing to control the spread of COVID-19 works because we now know that COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets. These droplets tend to fall within approx. 1 metre of their source and so we can effectively use this information to break the chain of infection. If we can avoid being within this 1 metre we can reduce the risk of either acquiring or spreading this virus. To manage this practically the physical distancing guidance is extended out to 2 metres, here in Northern Ireland we would say that the 2 metres is 'to be sure'!

Within our service this can be challenging, for example sometimes the environment that we work



in can be physically constrained or sometimes we need to work closely with each other to ensure best outcomes for our patients. Whilst we have to accept that we can't control every single situation there may be more opportunity to carry out social distancing than you might initially think.

Areas to think about distancing in:

- Staff rest areas
- Staff kitchens
- Shared offices
- Communal spaces
- Corridors
- Areas such as dirty utility rooms, laundry rooms, waste disposal rooms, drugs rooms etc...
- On board vehicles, crews can travel with one person in the cab and one in the back of the vehicle

If you would like to discuss Social/ Physical Distancing you can talk to a member of the Operational Support Unit on 02890400721 or IPC on 07717781954.

COVID-19 (coronavirus)
Everyone in Northern Ireland should now be using social distancing

Stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people

The latest information and advice on coronavirus is available at www.pha.site/coronavirus