Coronavirus – Plea to people living in Lothian to help avoid second lockdown

NHS Lothian has issued a plea to all Lothian residents to follow the latest Covid-19 guidance and in doing so, help to keep Lothian out of lockdown.

The plea comes as the Edinburgh holiday weekend begins, coupled with relatively pleasant weather.

NHS Lothian says it recognises that the majority of the public want to do the right thing when it comes to Covid-19, but with different guidance emerging in different places across the UK, acknowledges that it may be easy for some to become confused.

Dr Duncan McCormick, Consultant in Public Health, NHS Lothian said: "Covid-19 isn't going away anytime soon, and while I know people may be growing weary hearing about it, it is critical that we all still play our part in helping to stop the spread of the virus. Using common sense and following the guidance is critical to this."

So what is the latest guidance? And how can we keep ourselves and our loved ones safe?

Limit the number of people you meet with

Whether indoors or outside, no more than six people in total (from a maximum of two households) are able to meet at any time.

Social distancing when meeting friends and family from different households must still be practiced. This does not include children under 12, who are not included in the six people count and who do not need to socially distance.

In one day, people should not meet up with more than four other households. This will limit the risk that someone who had the virus without realising it could infect multiple households on the same day.

Observe social distancing

When meeting up with others, it is important that social distancing is maintained. You should stay two meters apart from other people both indoors and outside.

If you find yourself in an area where it is more difficult to socially distance from others, for example in a supermarket, wear a face covering if you are able.

If you arrive somewhere like a pub, park, beach or river and it is already very busy, please consider going elsewhere.

Download the Protect Scotland App

Downloading the Protect Scotland App is the next step in fighting COVID-19. It is anonymous, private and free.

The app will alert you if you have been in close contact with another app user who tests positive for coronavirus. If you test positive, it can help in determining contacts that you may have otherwise missed, but at the same time keeping your information private and anonymous.

Remember hand washing is still vital

It is still important to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser. Please do this when you get home, into work, or any new building like shops etc, when you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, and when you eat or handle food.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Wear face coverings

Face coverings should be worn in shops, on public transport and public transport premises such as railway stations, bus stations and airports, and in other indoor public places such restaurants (when not seated), libraries and places of worship.

Dr McCormick added: "The guidelines mean that activities like pub crawls, house parties, and big meet ups at the park or the beach should not be happening at this time.

"I know it's frustrating not being able to socialise like we used to, but we all need to do our bit. Across Lothian, we are seeing COVID cases rise and if we don't act now, the situation could easily get out of hand. The reality is, that unless we adhere to the rules more rigorously, we could soon be faced with tighter restrictions and even a further lockdown.

"COVID is serious, it is unpredictable and it can be deadly. For younger, healthier people you might not think that COVID could impact you, but I would urge you all to stop and think – through your actions you could risk passing COVID on to your family or friends."

What should you do if you develop symptoms?

If you experience a high fever, persistent cough or loss of taste or smell, you must self-isolate and order a COVID test through the NHS inform website – https://www.nhsinform.scot/

You should get tested in the first three days of symptoms

appearing, although testing is effective until day five. You won't normally be tested after day five unless it's for a specific reason. This will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

If you do not have any symptoms of COVID-19, you should not book a test.

Further information on COVID-19, including symptom checkers and general testing advice, is available on the NHS Inform website: https://www.nhsinform.scot/