Prof’s Covid-19 clinic

Answering university students’ queries

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FROM wearing masks to elbow bumps, an associate professor at the University of Reading has answered people’s coronavirus questions.

Questions were put forward to associate professor, Simon Clarke, a virology expert in the university’s School of Biological Sciences, amid the virus’ outbreak.

He has since answered the questions, including those below:

Should people be taking extra precautions? If so, what?

“People probably need to wash their hands more than they likely do already.

“That’s a really good way of reducing the chances of getting infected because when you get the virus on your hands, you’re more likely when you touch your mouth, your nose, your eyes, to get yourself infected. So, reduce the amount of times you touch your face, keep your hands clean – that’s probably the best precaution to use.

“Of course, some people are using an elbow bump instead of shaking hands but that’s a matter of personal preference.”

Do you expect the UK’s response to be similar to Italy’s if cases increase here?

“Yes.

“If we see a really big upswing in the numbers of infections across the UK, we may see the health authorities, the government impose some restrictions on people’s movements and people’s gatherings but exactly what those are, we don’t know yet and there really is no point in putting those measures in place until they’re needed, until we have got enough people that we can control using them otherwise it’s a waste of time.”

Do we have to get tested if we have a simple cough?

“No.

“The government’s advice at the moment is to dial 111 if you’re having shortness of breath, if you’re having coughing symptoms.

“NHS online will give you more details.

“Just because you get a simple cough doesn’t mean you have to self isolate. That advice might change though so watch that space.”