



## UPDATED Basic principles of protection from COVID-19

The new coronavirus **SARS-CoV-2** causes the disease called **COVID-19**.

- the coronavirus is highly infectious meaning it spreads very easily among people
- it causes symptoms similar to influenza or the flu and may cause more severe respiratory problems
- COVID-19 can cause a very severe condition for our respiratory system, making it difficult to breathe
  - it can sometimes affect the heart, causing damage to heart muscles
- anyone can get the COVID-19 disease, but it affects people differently
  - some people only have mild symptoms like a flu and recover easily
  - but ~~most~~ other people suffer a severe and painful influenza
  - some people may die
    - COVID-19 can cause death in those who are:
      - elderly
      - have a weak or compromised immune system
      - have underlying medical conditions
      - not treated early enough
      - poor and don't have enough food & nutrition and/or housing
      - poor and have no access to good health care or can't afford it
- the symptoms of people with COVID-19 include fever, cough, sore throat, diarrhoea, headaches, body aches and pains, and loss of smell
- people with COVID-10 might have some or all of these symptoms
- not all people with COVID-19 have a loss of smell
  - any kind of "smell test" is unreliable because not everyone with COVID-19 loses their sense of smell

- you can be infected with COVID-19 and still be able to smell, while you are infecting others

The COVID-19 disease has an incubation period of 2 to 14 days.

- the “incubation period” means the time between catching the coronavirus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease COVID-19
  - during that time, you either get sick, you recover, or you find out you don’t have COVID-19
  - that’s why the recommended self-isolation or quarantine period is 14 days
- some people show symptoms after 2 or 3 days
- some people show no symptoms for 10 or 12 days
- some people show no symptoms at all

No one is immune to the novel coronavirus and COVID-19.

- people who have COVID-19 but do not show any symptoms are not immune
- they can still infect other people
- and this spreads the coronavirus and puts our family members, friends and co-workers at risk
- people who have had COVID-19 and recovered can get it again
  - in some countries there is high re-infection rate, where people who survived COVID-19 get it again
  - they have no immunity

The coronavirus can be transmitted through bodily fluids from an infected person, especially in the form of tiny droplets from coughing or sneezing.

If these tiny droplets carrying the coronavirus land directly in our noses, mouths or eyes, then we could become infected.

- physical distancing of 2 meters is recommended to reduce the risk of this happening
- you must cough or sneeze into your elbow to prevent tiny droplets going into the air and onto others around you

- everyone must wear a mask when going outside and/or interacting with other people
  - a mask will help to stop these droplets getting into our mouths or noses
    - we can use masks made of cotton and other suitable materials
      - masks should be three-layered to be more effective in:
        - catching droplets in the outer layer of the mask, preventing it from getting into our mouth and nose
        - catching droplets on the inside of our mask, so droplets we sneeze or cough don't get out into the air
      - we need at least two layers for this protection and three layers is far more effective
        - another possibility is a two-layered mask with a pocket to insert disposable tissues that can be thrown away
      - a singly layered mask is not effective because droplets can build up and leak out or leak in, increasing the risk of infection or infecting others
- the coronavirus can be aerosolized in tiny droplets that float in the air for 30 minutes and maybe up to 3 hours
- just like an aerosol spray (e.g. air freshener, deodorant, perfume, mosquito spray) makes tiny drops that float in the air, the tiny droplets carrying the coronavirus can float in the air
  - so wearing a mask is important
  - the tiny droplets eventually fall to the ground or other surfaces
- if you are in a room with others it is necessary to wear a mask at all times
  - maintain distancing and minimize the number of people
  - there should be good ventilation to reduce the risk of tiny droplets spreading in the air

People often touch their nose and mouth with their hands, especially when they have influenza. If we are infected with the coronavirus then it is possible tiny droplets containing the virus are on our hands.

- so by touching hands can transmit the coronavirus between people
  - we touch hands, then we touch our nose, mouth or eyes and become infected
    - so we must frequently wash our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
      - if we don't have soap and water, then we should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- if we touch our nose or mouth with our hands then touch door handles and other surfaces, the virus can get onto these door handles and surfaces
  - then other people who touch these door handles or surfaces can become infected, because they will touch their nose, mouth or eyes
    - it is not transmitted through our skin
  - the virus can be active on surfaces for up to 3 days or even longer in colder climates
    - so we must frequently wash our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
      - if we don't have soap and water, then we should use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
  - we must also disinfect door handles and surfaces regularly

As we already said, the tiny droplets carrying coronavirus into the air if we sneeze or cough can remain in the air for 30 minutes and maybe up to 3 hours.

- these droplets then fall onto surfaces
- the virus can be active on surfaces for up to 3 days
  - if we touch these surfaces then touch our noses, mouths or eyes, then we could become infected
  - so we must frequently wash our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
    - if we don't have soap and water, then we should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

- we must disinfect surfaces regularly

**We must remember:**

- **always wear a mask**
- **always wash you hands with soap or use a hand-sanitizer**
- **if you have symptoms or have had any contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 then self-isolation or quarantine is necessary**
- **you should get a swab test COVID-19**
- **self-isolation, self-quarantine and quarantine are effective measures to limit the spread of the COVID-19 disease**
- **by isolating ourselves there is less opportunity for the coronavirus to spread**
- **through self-isolation, quarantine, physical distancing and (whenever possible) staying at home, we all help to reduce the opportunities for the coronavirus to spread from one person to the next**
- **the coronavirus will have no place to go!**
- **when the coronavirus can't find new people to infect, then the COVID-19 disease can be controlled and suppressed ... to finally go away.**

**Just remember - we are fighting the COVID-19 disease together. We are not fighting the people infected with the coronavirus.**