

SARS-COV-2 (CORONAVIRUS)

Important questions and answers.

Always protecting your health
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WHAT IS COVID-19?

It is a disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

WHAT IS THE COURSE OF COVID-19?

In 80% of cases, COVID-19 symptoms are mild. 15-20% of patients may develop severe form of the disease.

HOW IS COVID-19 TREATED?

As yet, there are no vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 or medications that would prevent or control the coronavirus in the infected person. Doctors make individual decisions about the method of treatment, depending on the symptoms found.

ARE ANTIBIOTICS EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING OR TREATING COVID-19?

No. Antibiotics do not work against viruses; they only work on bacterial infections. COVID-19 is caused by a virus, so antibiotics do not work.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

Initially, the symptoms are very similar to the flu or a simple cold.

10%
of the patients
infected with
SARS-CoV-2 are
asymptomatic.

5%
of the infected
manifest slight
cold-like symptoms
that are easy to
overlook.

30%
of the infected
show signs of
mild flu-like viral
infection.

31%
of the infected
have such
symptoms
as: coughing,
headaches and
aching muscles.

6%
of the infected
report serious
respiratory
problems and
shortness of
breath.

24%
of the infected
need hospital
treatment.

AROUND
20%
of the cases
the course of the
infection is referred
to as critical.



WHEN DO SYMPTOMS OF THE SARS-COV-2 INFECTION BEGIN TO SHOW?

The incubation period of the virus ranges from 1 to 14 days, most commonly around 5 days.

CAN PEOPLE INFECTED WITH SARS-COV-19 CORONAVIRUS SPREAD THE INFECTION?

Unfortunately, people who do not yet have COVID-19 symptoms or who are asymptomatic may spread the disease (the infection spreads 1–2 days before the symptoms appear). Therefore, it is so important to maintain basic safety principles.

WHO CAN GET INFECTED?

Everyone, regardless of their age. Only the people who had COVID-19 and recovered (the so-called survivors) develop resistance to SARS-CoV-2.

WHO IS PARTICULARLY AT RISK OF SARS-COV-2 INFECTION?

Older people and patients suffering from underlying diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease are particularly at risk of severe COVID-19.

This is also true for people with a weakened immune system, especially those undergoing cancer treatment and suffering from autoimmune diseases or treated with immunosuppressive medications for other reasons.

HOW DOES SARS-COV-2 SPREAD?

The coronavirus penetrates the body through the nose, mouth and eyes. It spreads primarily through small droplets that are expelled when a person coughs, sneeze or speaks.

Direct contact with droplets from the infected person and objects contaminated by the virus is also dangerous.

Based on our current knowledge, the virus is not transmitted through skin or food. It does not spread during sexual intercourse.

It does not penetrate the placenta of the infected mother or her breastmilk.

WHEN CAN YOU BECOME INFECTED WITH SARS-COV-2?

- If you live with a COVID-19 patient.
- If you take care of a COVID-19 patient without adequate protection measures, or if you work in a laboratory and handle samples collected from COVID-19 patients.
- If you have direct contact with a COVID-19 patient, e.g. by holding their hand.
- If you have direct contact with droplets expelled by a COVID-19 patient, e.g. you touch a used handkerchief or you stand close when the other person is coughing.
- If you have stayed at a distance smaller than 2 m from a COVID-19 patient for at least 15 minutes.
- If you stay in close proximity (face-to-face) with a COVID-19 patient.
- If you travel by plane or by other means of public transport with a COVID-19 patient and you fail to keep a sufficient distance (2 seats in each direction).

Due to the spread of the epidemic, any contact with a person whose health condition is uncertain involves the risk of the infection. Therefore, the recommendation to keep a safe distance applies to everyone, not only the people who demonstrate symptoms of the infection.

CORONAVIRUS – HOW LONG CAN IT SURVIVE?



72hours
PLASTICS



72hours
STEEL



24hours
CARDBOARD



3hours
AIR



4hours
COPPER



METAL	door handles, jewellery, cutlery	5 days
GLASS	glasses, mirrors, windows	up to 5 days
CERAMICS	dishes, pots, cups	5 days
PAPER	newspapers, magazines	up to 5 days
WOOD	frames, wooden boards	4 days
PLASTICS	milk bottles, elevator buttons, bus seats	2–3 days
STAINLESS STEEL	pots, pans, sinks, water bottles	2–3 days
CARDBOARD	transport boxes	1 day
ALUMINIUM	beverage cans, aluminium foil, water bottles	2–8 hours
COPPER	pennies, kettles, stove	4 hours
FOOD/WATER	it does not spread through food or water	

SARS-CoV-2 persistence depending on temperature and humidity:

<https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/action/showFullTableHTML?isHtml=true&tableId=tbl1 pii=S0195-6701%2820%2930046-3>

WHEN IS SARS-COV-2 KILLED?

The coronavirus has a lipid (fatty) bilayer dissolved by soap and 60–70% alcohol. Therefore, it is killed when you wash your hands with soap or disinfect them using preparations with the relevant alcohol concentration.

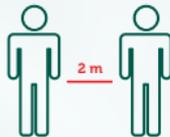
HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SARS-COV-2 INFECTION ON A DAILY BASIS?



**WASH YOUR HANDS
WITH SOAP AND WATER AS OFTEN
AS POSSIBLE, AND DISINFECT THEM
WITH AT LEAST ALCOHOL-BASED
DISINFECTANTS AT CONCENTRATIONS
OF 60–70%.**



**REGULARLY DISINFECT
EVERYDAY ITEMS
(E.G. PHONE).**



**KEEP A DISTANCE
OF AT LEAST 2 M
IN THE PUBLIC.**



**WEAR A MASK
THAT COVERS YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE
IN THE PUBLIC AND WHEN IN CONTACT
WITH OTHER PEOPLE.**



**AVOID TOUCHING
YOUR NOSE
AND MOUTH.**

Remember: the virus can spread from a person who does not present any symptoms (the so-called asymptomatic transmission).

WHY SHOULD YOU WEAR A MASK THAT COVERS YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE?

Masks reduce the transmission of the virus from your airways. Therefore, you reduce the risk of infecting other people. They do not protect you from becoming infected from other people, so you need to keep the appropriate distance. Furthermore, it is difficult to touch your mouth and nose with your hands when wearing a mask, which you usually do subconsciously.

HOW TO PROPERLY USE MASKS?

When improperly used, masks can increase the risk of infection instead of reducing it.

- After putting the mask on your face, do not touch the parts on your mouth or nose.
- Remove the mask from behind the ears and head, never the part that touches your mouth and nose.
- Discard a used mask into a plastic bag (if you have a mask made from cotton or other fabric, and you want to wash it) or throw it away into a bin (if the mask is disposable).
- Wash your hands with soap, and disinfect them with at least alcohol-based disinfectants at concentrations of 60–70%.
- Wash your reusable mask after each use at least 60°C. Use washing or both washing and disinfecting agents (based on active chlorine bleach). Iron the mask with an iron heated to the maximum temperature.
- Do not lend your mask to anyone, even if you have washed and ironed it.
- Do not touch masks, gloves or used handkerchiefs left by others.

WHAT ARE FACE SHIELDS FOR?

They protect the entire surface of your face and eyes, and prevent touching these areas subconsciously.

CAN SARS-COV-2 SPREAD THROUGH FOOD?

According to the opinion of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published on 9 March 2020, to the best of the current knowledge, there is no evidence that food may be a source or an intermediate link of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. EFSA stresses that, based on the experience with SARS and MERS, it can be concluded that SARS-CoV-2 does not spread among humans through food. Therefore, the virus is unlikely to be transmitted through food and there is no evidence to date that this is the case.

To maintain the microbiological safety of food, it is important to strictly observe basic principles of food safety that prevent its contamination, including secondary contamination at the stage of distribution and sales.

For more information on COVID-19 and food safety, please visit:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/biosafety_crisis_covid19_qandas_pl.pdf

WHAT IS THE RISK OF GETTING COVID-19 FROM FOOD PACKAGING?

Although according to a recent study the causal agent of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) was shown to persist for up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to several days on hard surfaces such as steel and plastics in experimental settings (e.g. controlled relative humidity and temperature), there is no evidence that contaminated packages, which have been exposed to different environmental conditions and temperatures, transmit the infection.

Nonetheless, to address concerns that virus present on the skin might be able to transfer to the respiratory system (for example by touching the face), persons handling packaging, including consumers, should adhere to the guidance of public health authorities regarding good hygiene practices, including regular and effective hand-washing.

CAN I GET INFECTED THROUGH THE HANDLING OF FOOD BY PEOPLE WHO MAY BE INFECTED?

According to food safety agencies in the EU Member States, it is very unlikely that you can catch COVID-19 from handling food. The European Food Safety Authority stated in addition that there is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus.

No information is currently available on whether the virus responsible for COVID-19 can be present on food, survive there and infect people. At the same time, there is no evidence to date that food has been a source or vehicle of infection while there is no doubt that people currently ill have been infected by contact with other infected people.

Theoretically, as is the case for any contact surface contaminated by an infected person, be it a door handle or another surface, food could also lead to indirect contamination through touching it. This is why everybody should follow the recommendations of public health authorities on the washing of hands.

Retailers are aware of hygiene requirements when handling food. Staff who needs to manipulate food (for example cutting meat, slicing meat or dairy products, cleaning fish, packaging fruit and vegetables) wears gloves and frequently replaces them, or otherwise frequently washes his/her hands.

Consumers should also play their role. As a general good hygiene practice, customers in shops should not handle food other than what they intend to purchase, so as to avoid contaminating it with any pathogen that may be present on their hands.

WHAT IS THE RISK OF COVID-19 INFECTION OF MY PET FROM PET FOOD?

As for human food, there has been no report of transmission of COVID-19 to animals via consumption of pet food. This assessment is also valid for feed for farmed animals. As for food for human consumption, it is very unlikely that you can catch COVID-19 from handling pet food. The recommendations regarding the handling of pet food packages are the same as for the handling of any other package.

CAN I DO SOMETHING MYSELF AT HOME TO MINIMISE ANY POTENTIAL RISK FROM FOOD CONVEYING THE VIRUS RESPONSIBLE FOR COVID-19?

1.

FIRST, WASHING THOROUGHLY YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WARM WATER BEFORE AND AFTER SHOPPING

Is particularly important as it will protect yourself as well as others.

2.

IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO APPLY STRICTLY THE HYGIENE RULES IN YOUR KITCHEN

That usually protect you from food poisoning.

3.

STORE YOUR FOOD PROPERLY

Any contact between the food consumed raw and cooked food must be avoided, discard outer packaging before storage (for example cardboard outers where there is an inner plastic package) while keeping track of key information such as maximum duration limits.

4.

SYSTEMATICALLY WASH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WITH CLEAN WATER

Especially if they are not going to be cooked (COVID-19 will not survive cooking).

5.

AVOID CONTAMINATION BY KITCHENWARE (KNIFES, PLATES, ETC.)

Wash them with a detergent between them to various food ingredients.

6.

RESPECT COOKING INSTRUCTIONS (TIME, TEMPERATURE)

Refers to food intended for consumption after cooking.

7.

WASH YOUR HANDS WITH WARM WATER AND SOAP

Before you start preparing or cooking food, as well as after having prepared food.

8.

CLEAN REGULARLY MORE OFTEN THAN USUAL REFRIGERATORS AND COUNTERTOPS

They now require a lot more hygiene.

The precautions against COVID-19 should not make you forget the classic rules to avoid food poisoning when you cook at home that still apply and which protect you from foodborne illnesses that would further burden the healthcare facilities.