



New coronavirus

Updated on 06 July 2020

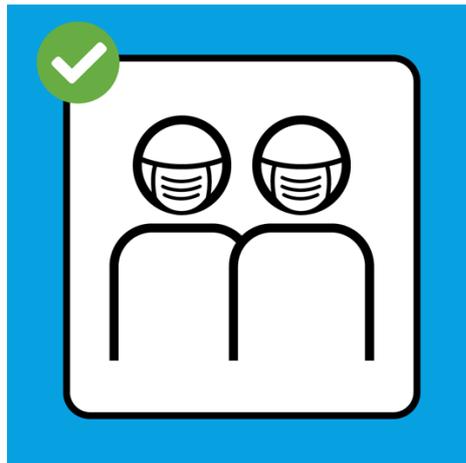
PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS.



Fact sheet

Important information on the new coronavirus and the social distancing and hygiene rules.

Masks compulsory on public transport



Continue to follow the hygiene and social distancing rules. We don't want the spread of the new coronavirus to increase again.



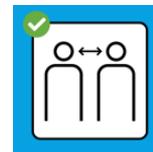
If you experience symptoms, get tested immediately and stay at home.



Always leave your contact details whenever possible so you can be traced.



Isolate yourself if you test positive. Quarantine yourself if you've had contact with someone who has tested positive.



Keep your distance.



Wash your hands thoroughly.



Avoid shaking hands.



Cough and sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your arm.



Only go to the doctor or A&E after you have notified them by phone.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the new coronavirus

Following the easing of measures to protect the population against the coronavirus more people are now moving around in public. The Federal Council continues to rely on members of the public to behave responsibly. The rules on hygiene and social distancing, as well as the sets of precautionary measures, are still key and should help to prevent new infections and thus a significant spike in the number of new cases. Precautionary measures must be in place in all publicly accessible establishments and businesses, as well as at events.

There is a significant risk of infection if a distance of 1.5 metres cannot be respected. This can be the case at any time, particularly when using public transport. In view of the increasing numbers of journeys being undertaken, and the fact that cases of infection have been rising since mid-June, the Federal Council is reinforcing its protective measures and has decided to make the wearing of face masks compulsory in all forms of public transport.

Personal responsibility remains important: Washing your hands regularly with soap and water and keeping your distance are still the best ways of preventing infection.

Continue to follow the hygiene and social distancing rules. We don't want the spread of the new coronavirus to increase again.

Infection and risks

Why are these rules of hygiene and social distancing so important?

The novel coronavirus is a new virus against which humans **still have no immunity (immune defences)**. **Many people could be infected and get the disease.** For this reason we have to slow down the spread of the new coronavirus as much as possible.

We particularly have to protect vulnerable people who are greater risk of becoming severely ill.

That means:

- People over 65
- Adults with the following underlying conditions:
 - **High blood pressure**
 - **Chronic respiratory diseases**
 - **Diabetes**
 - **Conditions and therapies that weaken the immune system**
 - **Cardiovascular disease, and**
 - **Cancer**

Or who are:

- **Seriously overweight (obese, with a BMI of 40 or more)**

Please talk to your doctor if you're not sure whether you belong to a vulnerable group.

We can protect these people more effectively too if we all keep to the hygiene and social distancing rules. Since intensive care units have only limited space and ventilators (breathing equipment), adhering to the rules also helps make sure that hospitals and other health centres can continue to give good treatment to people who are seriously ill.

Are you over 65, or do you have one of the underlying conditions listed above?

If so, the following measures apply:

- You can leave your home as long as you strictly follow the hygiene and social distancing rules. Avoid places with a lot of people (for example railway stations and public transport) and busy periods (for example Saturday shopping or weekday rush hour).
- Avoid unnecessary contact and keep your distance (at least 1,5 metres) from other people.
- If possible have a friend or neighbour go shopping for you, or order online or by phone. You'll also find sources of support from various organisations, via your local authority or on the internet.
- Try to use the phone, Skype or a similar tool for business and personal meetings.

If you have to go to the doctor, go by car, bike or on foot. If that's not possible, take a taxi. Keep at least 1,5 metres away from other people and follow the hygiene rules. **Recommendation: If it's not possible to keep your distance, wear a mask.**

If you work and are vulnerable because of an underlying condition, your employer must protect you.

You'll find useful information via Unia, the Swiss trade union: Your rights in the workplace
<https://www.unia.swiss/coronavirus>

Do you have one or more symptoms of the disease, such as coughing (in most cases a dry cough), a sore throat, shortness of breath, fever, a feeling or being feverish, muscle ache or sudden loss of your sense of smell and/or taste? **Immediately phone your doctor or a hospital, even at the weekend.** Describe your symptoms and say you're at an especially high risk (vulnerable).

How is the novel coronavirus transmitted?

The novel coronavirus is transmitted primarily by close and prolonged contact: if you're closer than 1,5 metres to a person who has the illness.

The virus spreads

- By **droplet infection**: If the person with the disease **sneezes or coughs**, the virus can be transported directly to the mucous membranes in the nose, mouth or eyes of others.
- Via **the hands**: Infectious droplets from coughs or sneezes can be on the hands. Or you can touch a surface with viruses on it, which then get into the body when you touch your mouth, eyes or nose.

When can you infect other people?

Be aware: If you fall ill with the new coronavirus you are contagious for a long time. This means:

- already **a day before symptoms appear**, in other words before you notice you have been infected.
- **You are particularly contagious while you have symptoms**,
- and remain so **until at least 48 hours after** you feel completely well again. This means that you should continue to make sure that you keep your distance and wash your hands regularly with soap.

Can grandparents look after their grandchildren?

People over the age of 65 are considered to be at especially high risk and should protect themselves accordingly. This includes many grandparents. Grandparents must ultimately decide for themselves whether or not look after their grandchildren.

For grandparents we recommend the following:

- Observe the rules on hygiene and social distancing, i.e. wash your hands frequently, don't share glasses or cutlery with children and keep your distance from the parents.
- Avoid places frequented by large numbers of people, e.g. railway stations or public transport during peak times.
- Don't look after the children if either you or the children are ill, even if the symptoms are mild.

Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment

What are the symptoms of the illness caused by the new coronavirus?

The following symptoms occur frequently:

- Coughing (in most cases a dry cough)
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fever, a feeling of being feverish
- Muscle ache
- Sudden loss of sense of smell and/or taste

The following symptoms are rare:

- Headache
- Gastrointestinal (stomach/gut) symptoms
- Conjunctivitis
- The "sniffles" (symptoms of a cold)

The symptoms vary in severity, and can also be mild. Complications, such as pneumonia, are also

possible.

But if you have one or more of the frequently occurring symptoms it could be that you have the novel coronavirus disease.

In this case:

- **Stay at home.**
- **Contact a doctor, hospital or other health centre and ask whether you should have a test.**
- **Read the instructions on isolation**
(<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/downloads-in-verschiedenen-sprachen.html>) and follow them consistently.

If you are over age 65 or have an underlying condition, you must absolutely call a doctor immediately if you have one or more of the frequent symptoms – even at the weekend.

Are you unsure what to do?

If you go to the coronavirus check at <https://check.bag-coronavirus.ch/screening> and answer a small number of questions you will receive a recommendation on what to do from the Federal Office of Public Health (in German, French, Italian and English).

On the Canton Vaud website at <https://coronavirus.unisante.ch/evaluation> you'll find a coronavirus check in 8 further languages.

The coronavirus check is no substitute for a professional medical consultation, diagnosis or treatment. The symptoms described in the check can also occur in connection with other diseases that require a different approach.

Always contact a doctor if you have prominent symptoms that get worse or concern you.

How is the novel coronavirus illness treated?

The options are currently limited to relieving the symptoms. Those with the disease are isolated for the protection of others. In most severe cases, intensive care at a hospital – possibly including artificial respiration – is required.

Do you have problems, a feeling of being unwell or symptoms that are not connected with the new coronavirus?

You must still take health problems, illnesses and symptoms that are not connected with the new coronavirus seriously and get treatment. Get help and don't wait too long: phone a doctor.

Further information

What events are allowed to take place?

Private and public events with up to 300 people are allowed. This includes family events, fairs and exhibitions, concerts, theatrical performances, films, political and civil demonstrations, as well as sports and club events.

Private and family events may also be held outside private homes. No precautionary measures are required. However, the organiser must keep an attendance list with contact information (first names, last names and phone numbers).

Public events and sporting events and competitions: Precautionary measures must be in place for events of this type.

Not yet allowed until 6 July are contests involving close physical contact (judo, wrestling, etc.).

Important: The distancing and hygiene rules must be observed to safeguard those present.

The Federal Council is easing the measures in stages. Why is that?

The measures can only be eased if the number of cases continues to fall. The step-by-step easing of measures must take account of the impact it will have on public health, the national economy and society. Protecting the population against infection from the coronavirus remains the main objective. Only when it is certain that there is no worsening of the situation after measures are eased, i.e. there has been no rise in the number of new infections or hospital admissions, can the Federal Council consider a further step.

By proceeding step-by-step, the Federal Council can observe the impact and to go back one step if the number of infections increases again.

Where to get help.

What can I do if they don't speak or understand my language in the hospital?

From the start ask for a translator (interpreter). There are also interpreting services by phone. If professional interpreters are brought in you don't have to take your relatives with you to translate, so they're protected from infection. In the event of medical interventions you have the right to understand and be understood.

Do you have to stay at home and need food or medication?

Or would you like to help?

Look to the people in your immediate environment:

- Is there someone you could ask for help?
- Or could you offer someone your help?

Other options:

- Contact your municipal or town council
- Use the Five up app
- Check out www.hilf-jetzt.ch / www.aide-maintenant.ch

Here too the following still holds: The hygiene and social distancing rules must always be complied with.

Are you worried or need someone to talk to?

Here you'll find information:

- On the internet at www.dureschnufe.ch / <http://www.santepsy.ch> / www.salutepsi.ch
- Telephone advice from the Dargebotene Hand/La main tendue/Telefono Amico Ticino e Grigioni Italiano by dialling 143

Do you feel threatened at home? Are you seeking help or protection?

- You'll find phone numbers and email addresses for anonymous advice and protection all over Switzerland at www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch / www.aide-aux-victimes.ch / www.aiuto-alle-vittime.ch.
- In an **emergency** call the police: phone number **117**

Further important phone numbers:

- **Ambulance 144: This service** is available around the clock all over Switzerland for all medical emergencies.
- **Infoline** on the new coronavirus: By phoning **058 463 00 00** you can get answers to questions on the new coronavirus.
- **If you don't have a family doctor (GP):** You can call **Medgate** on **0844 844 911** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Returning to work

The Federal Council still recommends that you work from home if you can, not least to avoid peak occupancy times on public transport. However, it is the employer who decides whether and when staff should return to the workplace.

If you are employed and at risk due to an underlying medical condition, your employer must take measures to protect you.



Masks compulsory on public transport

Where exactly do masks have to be worn?

Masks are compulsory in all forms of public transport, i.e. in trains, trams and busses, but also in cable cars and on lake and river boats. There is an exception for ski lifts and chair lifts.

Are there exceptions for young children and any other groups?

Children under the age of 12 are exempt. Individuals who are unable to wear a mask for a particular reason, especially medical reasons, are also exempt.

Do I still have to wear a mask if the train or bus I am travelling in is half empty?

The wearing of masks is compulsory regardless of how many people are travelling. You never know how many people are going to be getting on board. Given the increasing number of commuters and leisure travel during the holidays, passenger numbers are generally likely to be high.

If I don't have a mask with me, can I pull a scarf over my mouth and nose, or use a towel?

No, scarves and towels do not satisfy the requirement to wear a mask. A scarf does not provide sufficient protection against infection and is of only limited use in protecting others. You should wear a face mask or industrially manufactured fabric face covering.

Who will be checking to see whether passengers are wearing a mask?

Checks will be carried out and enforced by train staff and the railway police or security staff.

What if I refuse to wear a mask?

Anyone refusing to wear a mask, will be asked to get off at the next stop. If that person refuses the requests of security staff and does not get off, they can be fined for disobedience (under the normal fines procedure, not a fixed penalty).

Why are masks not being made compulsory in all public spaces?

On public transport, people are close together for longer periods of time which increases the risk of infection. Furthermore, it is not possible to gather the contact details of those present, which makes contact tracing impossible if someone contracts COVID-19.

For a long time, the message from the FOPH was that masks did not protect healthy people in public spaces. So why are they now being made compulsory?

Anyone wearing a mask protects others. A person who is infected can be contagious two days before experiencing symptoms without even being aware. If everyone wears a mask in confined spaces, everyone is protected from each other. Even if there is no 100% guarantee of protection, the spread of the virus can be slowed.



Coronavirus tests and contact tracing break the chains of infection.

Why these two measures are so important?

In order to live an almost 'normal' life, anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should get themselves tested for coronavirus immediately - even if the symptoms are only mild. In addition to testing, it is also important that people provide their contact details, for example, when going to a restaurant, so that they can be traced if necessary. Because infected people may already be contagious, even if they still feel healthy. Testing and contact tracing can break the chain of infection.

If the coronavirus test is positive, the contact tracing process begins

- The cantonal authorities work with the infected person to try to identify all those they may have come into close contact with.
- The authorities notify the people concerned about the possibility of infection and what to do next.
- The individuals concerned have to go into quarantine for ten days following their last contact with the infected person, even if they have no symptoms.
- If no infection is detected during that time, the authorities lift the quarantine.



SwissCovid App

With the help of the SwissCovid app for mobile phones, we are hoping to contain the spread of the new coronavirus. The more people that use the SwissCovid app, the greater its contribution will be. Anyone who spends a certain amount of time in close proximity to a person who subsequently tests positive for the new coronavirus, will be notified via the app that they may have been infected, and are advised on what to do next. The person's privacy remains protected at all times. Using the app is voluntary and free of charge. The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

SwissCovid app helps to break transmission chains more quickly

The SwissCovid app for mobile phones (Android/iPhone) will help to contain the new coronavirus. It complements the conventional contact tracing carried out by the cantons – and thereby helps to break the chains of transmission. The SwissCovid app is available in the Apple Store and Google Play Store.

- [Google Play Store for Android](#)
- [Apple Store for iOS](#)

Using the SwissCovid app is voluntary and free of charge. The more people who install and use the app, the more effectively the app can help us to contain the new coronavirus.

How does the SwissCovid app work? (see video at: <https://youtu.be/6haRTP6pFJI>)

Install the SwissCovid app on your Apple or Android smartphone. All you then need to do is switch on Bluetooth and have your phone with you at all times.

When within Bluetooth range, the mobile phone exchanges random IDs (identification code) with other mobile phones that have a compatible app installed. The random IDs are stored on the mobile phone for 14 days before being deleted automatically. Apps compatible with the SwissCovid app are similar apps from other countries (e.g. Germany's Corona-Warn app). The random IDs of those using apps from other countries are currently stored, but it is not possible to receive notifications via these apps.

How notification works

If a SwissCovid app user tests positive for the coronavirus, they receive a Covidcode from the cantonal authorities. The code allows them to activate the notification function in the app, thereby warning app users that came into close contact with the infected person in the period starting two days before that person first experienced symptoms of the disease. When the code is entered, the app notifies these other app users automatically. The identity of the person who triggered the notification is not revealed. However, it is possible that someone could work out the identity based on the date. The people who have been notified can then call the infoline number in the app and find out what to do next. Their privacy is maintained at all times. If a person who has been notified has already developed symptoms of the disease, they should stay at home, avoid contact with other people, and do the [coronavirus check](#) or call their doctor.

By working together in this way, we can all help to break the chains of infection.

Protecting privacy

Data about other users recorded by your mobile phone is only saved locally on the device. Neither the mobile phone nor the SwissCovid app sends any personal or location data to a central storage location or server. This means that no one can work out who you have been in contact with or where that contact took place.

Once the coronavirus crisis is over, or if the app proves to be ineffective, the system will be shut down.

I have received an alert from the SwissCovid app saying the possibility of infection exists. Can I demand a test?

Yes, once you have received an alert about the possibility of infection you can get a test for free.

This test is designed to identify people who are already infected but who do not yet have symptoms.

The test should be done no sooner than 5 days after the possible infection.

If the test is positive you will be contacted by the cantonal authority responsible with details of how to proceed. This helps contain the spread of the virus.

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What is the novel coronavirus?

What is SARS-CoV-2, and what is COVID-19?

The novel coronavirus was discovered in China at the end of 2019 on the basis of an extraordinary incidence of pneumonia in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. The virus, which was given the name SARS-CoV-2, belongs to the same family as the pathogens responsible for Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

On 11 February 2020 the WHO gave the disease caused by the novel coronavirus an official name: COVID-19, short for coronavirus disease 2019.

The information currently available suggests that it was animals that transmitted the virus to humans and it is now spreading from person to person. It probably originated in a fish and animal market in the city of Wuhan, which has since been closed by the Chinese authorities.

Further information:

www.foph-coronavirus.ch
www.bag.admin.ch/new-coronavirus
(German, French, Italian, English)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG
Office fédéral de la santé publique OFSP
Ufficio federale della sanità pubblica UFSP
Federal Office of Public Health FOPH