



New coronavirus

Updated on 11 May 2020

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS.



Fact sheet

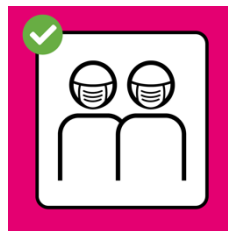
Important information on the new coronavirus and the social distancing and hygiene rules.

What can you do?

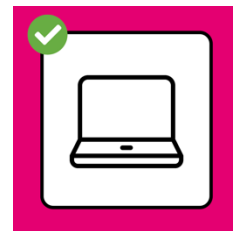
Continue to follow the hygiene and social distancing rules. We don't want the spread of the new coronavirus to increase again.



Keep your distance.



Recommendation: If it's not possible to keep your distance, wear a mask.



Continue to work from home if possible.

Strictly keep to the rules on hygiene and social distancing.



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



If you have symptoms, stay at home.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the new coronavirus

The Swiss Federal Council has eased further measures starting 11 May 2020: Children and young people up to Year 9 can go back to school. Shops, markets, museums, libraries and restaurants are allowed to open again provided they adhere to a protection plan.

The Federal Council still classifies the situation in Switzerland as 'extraordinary'.

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 two 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 two 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 two 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.

Does everyone have to wear a mask in public?

No, we don't recommend that healthy people wear a mask in public. It doesn't give them sufficient protection from infection with the coronavirus. **Only wear one if social distancing isn't possible.**

On the other hand a mask can prevent someone who is already infected from infecting other people.

Continue to do the following: Keep to the social distancing and hygiene rules.

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

Should I avoid public transport, particularly during peak travel times?

You can use public transport as long as the hygiene and social distancing rules can be kept to. If possible you should avoid using public transport at peak times. If that isn't possible, you should follow the measures in the transport company's protection plan.

The FOPH still advises people in vulnerable (high-risk) groups to avoid using public transport if possible.

Do I have to wear a mask on the train, bus or tram if I can't keep to the two-metre distancing rule?

If not so many people are using the public transport service, it's not necessary to wear a protective mask. But you should wear a mask at peak times.

Gatherings of more than 5 people are still prohibited.

On 20 March 2020 the Swiss Federal Council banned gatherings of more than 5 people in public. "In public" means public places, footpaths, parks and similar spaces. If you do encounter other people you must always stay more than 2 metres apart from one another. If you do not follow this rule you can be punished by a fine. The following still applies to all people in all age groups: keep to the bans and measures imposed by the Federal Council and all recommendations. Protect yourself and don't infect anyone else either!

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.

Have children?

Children shouldn't be looked after by their grandparents or other vulnerable people. Make sure that children **don't play in groups of more than 5**. Groups of children should stay together; in other words the same children should always play together. While the children are playing, the adults should not meet in groups.

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.
- **HEKS/EPER coronavirus helpline** in 10 languages (Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, Kurdish, Persian, Dari, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil, Tigrinya and Turkish): You can call **0800 266 785** for answers to questions about the coronavirus situation in Switzerland and information on the help available. More information at: <https://www.heks.ch/was-wir-tun/heks-mehrsprachiges-hilfetelefon#plakate-und-videos>

- **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

Once businesses and institutions open again people will be out and about more. Companies have to have measures in place to give their employees and customers the best possible protection from infection with the coronavirus. This means they have to define precautionary measures.

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