



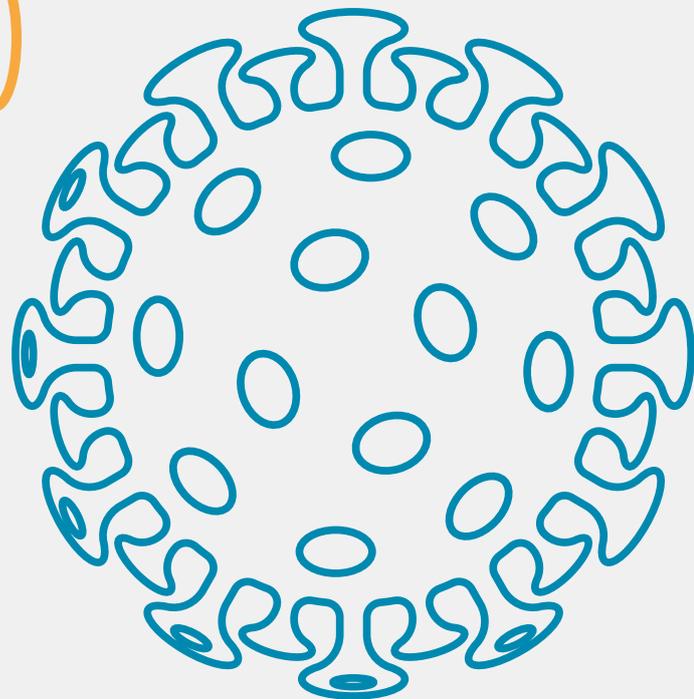
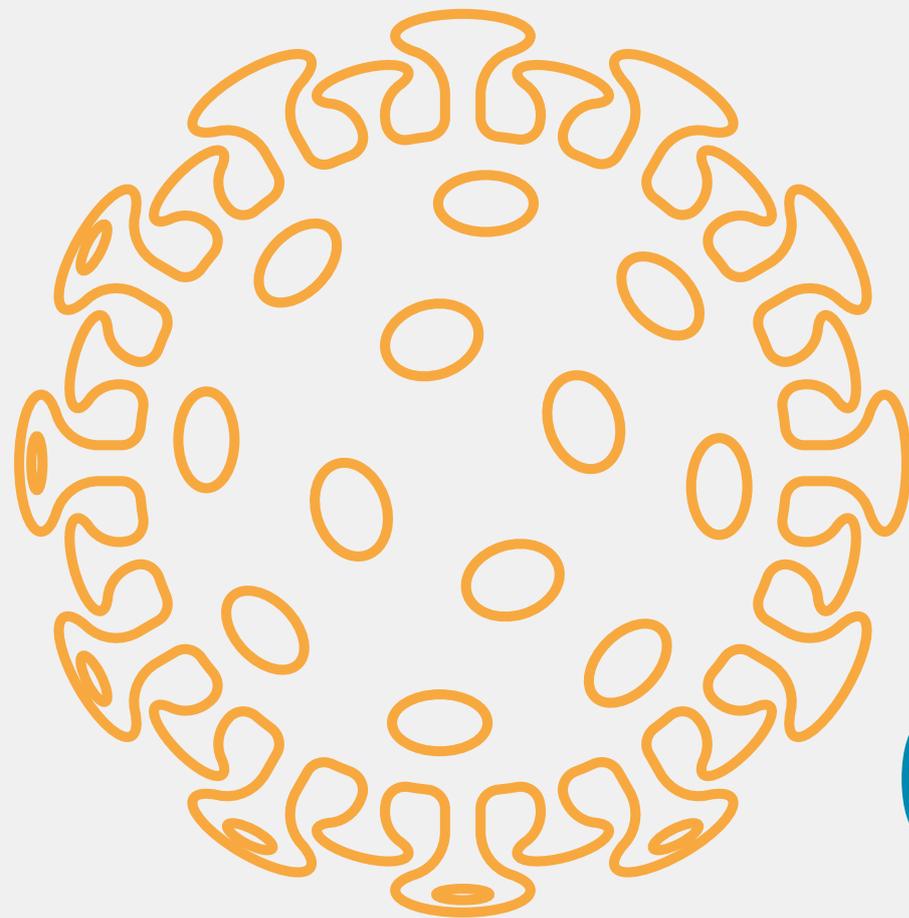
Bundesministerium  
für Gesundheit

*Ethno-  
Medizinisches  
Zentrum e.V.*



# Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

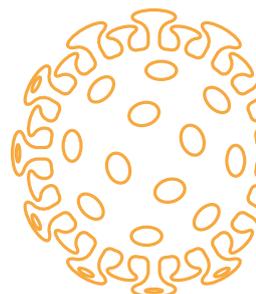
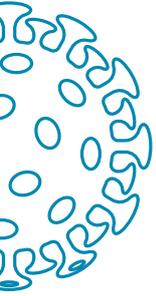
Information and practical advice



**Zusammen  
gegen Corona**

# Act safely and respectfully!

- Please make sure you comply with all the latest **instructions, appeals and notices issued by public authorities.**
- We must show **discipline and act in solidarity.**  
This will help protect your and your fellow citizens' health.
- Only trust **information sources** that are accurate and reliable.
- In Germany, you can obtain current and reliable information from, among others, the Robert Koch-Institute (RKI), the Federal Center for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung, BZgA) and the Ministry of Health (Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, BMG).
- Please also refer to the latest information from the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO offers current and reliable information in a range of languages.



# How can I best protect myself?

Social distancing + hygiene + masks in everyday life: by keeping up these three basic rules, you can protect yourself simply and effectively.

This formula is now complemented by advice to use an app and to regularly air indoor spaces.

The coronavirus alert app (Corona-Warn-App) can inform you anonymously and quickly if you have spent time in the vicinity of an infected person. It is also important to make sure that indoor spaces are aired regularly.

Therefore, please keep up social distancing + hygiene + masks + app + airing!

Also educate your family, friends and acquaintances about these protective measures.

Only by remaining mindful can we protect ourselves and others from infection.



## Protective hygiene rules when coughing or sneezing

- Cough or sneeze into a facial tissue. Use the tissue only once. Dispose of tissues in a rubbish bin with a lid.
- If there are no tissues available, hold the crook of your arm (not your hand!) in front of your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.



## Hand washing

- Wash your hands regularly with soap. Especially after returning home, blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing, before preparing food, before eating, after using the toilet, and before and after contact with someone who is ill. If possible, also wash your hands before you put on, and after you take off a mask.
- To wash your hands, hold them under a running tap. Then lather them up all over with soap. Take 20 to 30 seconds to gently rub the soapy lather into all parts of your hands, then rinse it off. Dry your hands thoroughly.



## Social distancing and face coverings

- Please stay informed about current restrictions imposed in your federal state (Bundesland) regarding contact between people.
- Avoid close contact such as shaking hands, kissing, and hugging. You are not being rude; you are merely protecting yourself and others.
- If you are sick, stay at home to recover, and to prevent spreading pathogens.
- Keep a distance of at least 1.5 meters to avoid the direct transmission of pathogens. Even people who are infected but do not show any symptoms can infect others.
- On public transport and while shopping, a medical grade face covering is to be worn. These include surgical masks, as well as FFP2, KN 95, and N95 masks. The implementation of this rule falls under the jurisdiction of the German federal states (Bundesländer). Additional rules may apply on a regional basis. Please check the rules that are currently in force where you are.

# Important facts about the coronavirus

The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 can be transmitted by droplets (e.g. when coughing or sneezing), but also through aerosols. Aerosols are tiny respiratory particles that are released especially by talking loudly or singing. They can remain suspended in the air over a longer period, and transmit the virus. Indoor spaces should therefore be aired regularly.

Smear infections also play a role. The virus can be transferred indirectly via the hands, from contaminated surfaces to the mucous membranes of the mouth, the nose, or the eyes. It is therefore important to follow general hygiene rules such as regular hand washing.

Disease progression may vary regarding symptoms and their severity. It can range from infections that pass without causing symptoms to cases of severe pneumonia.

The most commonly reported symptoms include cough, runny nose, and fever, as well as loss of the sense of smell and taste. These symptoms do not necessarily occur together. Other possible symptoms include headache, joint pain, fatigue, and sore throat. Stomach ache, and nausea and vomiting may also occur as a consequence of SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Especially older people and people with existing health conditions are at a higher risk of progressing to severe disease. However, younger people without pre-existing conditions may also experience progression to severe disease.

At this time, it is assumed that up to 14 days may pass between infection and the onset of symptoms. The median time period between infection and the appearance of symptoms is 5 – 6 days.

It is important to know that infected persons can pass the virus on to others several days before they even develop symptoms themselves! Many transmissions already occur during the one or two days immediately before the infected person develops symptoms.

An acute infection is diagnosed by detecting the virus directly. The most reliable method is detecting the genetic material of the virus using a PCR test carried out in a laboratory.

Another testing method is the rapid antigen test, which must be conducted by trained medical personnel. The interpretation of results for this test is simpler, and can also be carried out outside a laboratory.

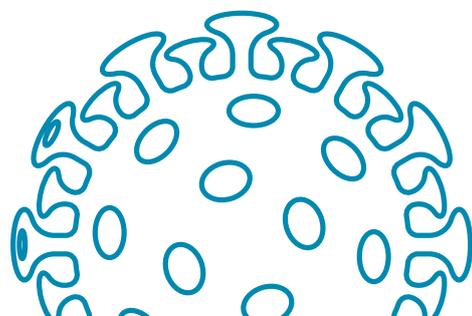
By now, the first rapid antigen tests have received approval from the Federal Institute for Medicines and Medical Products. These are now available from retail outlets and can be safely used by laypersons.

**Important:** a positive antigen self-test indicates a suspected infection and requires immediate confirmation with a PCR test.

If the result of your antigen test is positive, you must assume that you are highly infectious to other people. A negative test result, however, does not exclude the possibility of a coronavirus infection being present. You must therefore continue to follow the protective rules of social distancing + hygiene + masks + app + airing.

If someone within your social circle has become infected, this does not mean it is the person's own fault.

In some areas – e.g. in child care, nursing homes, or at work – not all situations that may pose a risk of transmission can be avoided.



## Have I got the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2?

If you notice you are having symptoms, or if you had contact with a person who has been confirmed to have the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, avoid all unnecessary contact with other people (especially those in risk groups), and stay at home.

If you have symptoms, contact your GP or other treating doctor. You can also contact the on-call medical service, a local corona hotline, or a fever clinic. These points of contact can inform you about what to do next.

The on-call medical service is available throughout Germany by dialling 116 117, including at night, at weekends, and on public holidays.

In an emergency, please call 112.

Tell the doctor if you have, for example, existing health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, severe depression, bipolar disorder, dementia, and chronic respiratory illness.

This also applies if you have a disease or are receiving treatment that lowers the immune system.

Please do not go to your doctor's practice without making an appointment. This way you are protecting yourself and avoid spreading coronavirus!

If you had contact with an infected person but don't have symptoms yourself, please inform the responsible local public health authority (Gesundheitsamt). This also applies if you are using the coronavirus alert app (Corona-Warn-App) and have received a warning message.

The public health authority will inform you about what to do next.

You can find your local public health authority at [www.rki.de/mein-gesundheitsamt](http://www.rki.de/mein-gesundheitsamt)

## Which vaccines are available?

Several vaccines for immunisation against COVID-19 have already been approved in Germany. Because production is still being scaled up, only a limited amount of vaccine is available on a day-to-day basis. This is why vaccination is prioritised based on scientific criteria:

To be vaccinated first are people with a high risk of progressing to severe or lethal disease, and those with a particularly high occupational risk of becoming infected or infecting vulnerable others.

The aim is to gradually provide equal access to coronavirus vaccination for everybody. COVID-19 vaccination is not compulsory in Germany.

You can find current information on coronavirus vaccination at

[www.corona-schutzimpfung.de](http://www.corona-schutzimpfung.de)

and by calling the Germany-wide freecall lines **116 117** (in German) or **0800 0000837** (in English, Turkish, Russian and Arabic),

or by contacting the sign language service at [www.zusammengencorona.de](http://www.zusammengencorona.de).

## Why do coronavirus mutations matter?

New variants of the coronavirus are also spreading in Germany, especially the variant B.1.1.7, first detected in Great Britain. According to current evidence, it is more infectious than the previous SARS-CoV-2 variant.

The protective measures taken and rules of behaviour recommended so far (social distancing + hygiene + masks + app + airing etc.) also protect from infection with new variants, and should therefore be strictly observed.

## Is wearing a face covering necessary?

When a person infected with SARS-CoV-2 is wearing a face covering, some of the droplets produced, e.g. when coughing or sneezing, are held back. Droplets then can't spread as far as they would without such protection. Especially in situations where social distancing is not always possible, wearing a face covering is therefore sensible.

FFP2 and FFP3 standard breathing masks also protect the wearer from infection with pathogens. Recommended are masks without exhalation valve, as these valves reduce protection for others.

According to the decision taken by the conference of federal state premiers on 19/01/2021, surgical masks, FFP2, KN95, or N95 masks are to be worn on public transport and when shopping. FFP2, KN95, and N95 are classes of protection used to standardise particle-filtering half masks in different countries. Implementation generally lies within the jurisdiction of the federal states (Bundesländer).

In regions with particularly high case numbers, wearing a mask on the street is often also compulsory. Additional rules may apply on a regional basis. Please check the rules that are currently in force where you are.\*

**Important:** masks must fit well over the mouth and nose, and must be changed when they have become damp. Damp masks do not provide a barrier to viruses.

Social distancing always applies, whether you are wearing a face covering or not: keep at least 1.5 meters apart from others, practice good hand hygiene and observe cough and sneeze etiquette, as well as airing indoor spaces regularly.

## Is it necessary to use hand disinfectant?

Regular and thorough hand washing is usually sufficient. If hand washing is not possible, hand disinfection may be sensible.

## What is the difference between isolation and quarantine, and what is their purpose?

Isolation is a measure imposed by the authorities on patients with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection. Depending on the severity of symptoms, it can be carried out at home or in hospital.

Quarantine is the time-limited segregation of persons who are suspected of being infected with SARS-CoV-2, or who may be able to spread the virus. They are mostly contacts of infected persons or travellers returning from risk areas.\*\*

The goal of isolation and quarantine is to prevent the spread of a pathogen by reducing contact with other people.

\* The NINA coronavirus alert app provides, apart from important warnings, information about the coronavirus pandemic. For selected locations and – if activated – your current location, you can receive information about local regulations currently in force. You can find further information about the NINA alert app at [www.bbk.bund.de/DE/NINA/Warn-App\\_NINA\\_node.html](http://www.bbk.bund.de/DE/NINA/Warn-App_NINA_node.html)

\*\* You can find information about what you have to do when entering Germany at [www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus-merkblatt-fuer-reisende](http://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus-merkblatt-fuer-reisende)  
Since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, German mobile phone network providers are also sending current coronavirus information from the German federal government by SMS to persons entering Germany.

## How long does isolation/quarantine last?

The decision whether a person may leave home quarantine or home isolation is taken by the local public health authority in consultation with the treating medical personnel.

For persons who are in home isolation because of COVID-19 illness, isolation is lifted no earlier than ten days after the onset of illness. Depending on the severity of symptoms, additional criteria may have to be met (e.g. sustained improvement of acute COVID-19 symptoms.)

For home quarantine, the Robert-Koch-Institute (RKI) recommends a duration of 14 days. It is calculated from the day of contact with an infectious person.

A rapid antigen or PCR test is required before quarantine can be lifted after 14 days.

## What should I keep in mind when quarantined at home?

During home quarantine, you must follow the instructions of the public health authority (Gesundheitsamt). These include that you do not leave your home and do not receive visitors. In addition, please monitor your state of health.

Avoid close contact with others in your household, and use communal spaces at different times where possible.

If being present in the same room at the same time is unavoidable, keep a distance of at least 1.5 meters and wear a medical face covering.

Even if quarantine has not been imposed on other members of your household, it is recommended that they place themselves in voluntary quarantine.

Also inform close contacts outside of your household. These persons should also restrict their contacts with others where possible, and watch for symptoms.

Ask family members, acquaintances or friends for help with shopping, which should then be left outside your door.

Make sure to air your apartment or house regularly.

Cutlery, crockery, and personal hygiene items should not be shared with other family members or people living in the household. Utensils and dishes must be washed regularly and thoroughly.

## What should I do if symptoms appear during home quarantine or home isolation?

Please immediately inform the public health authority (Gesundheitsamt) if you develop general malaise, or symptoms such as fever, cough, or breathing difficulties during home quarantine.

If you have confirmed COVID-19 disease and are convalescing in home isolation, you should obtain medical advice by telephone if your symptoms worsen.

If you need medical assistance for a different or pre-existing health condition, please call your GP, another medical practice, or the on-call medical service by dialling 116 117.

Make sure you mention during the call that you are in home quarantine.

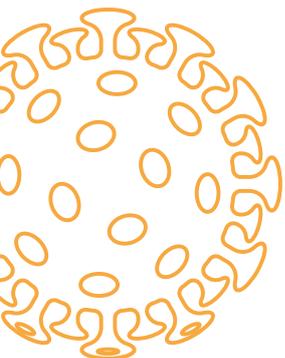
In an emergency, e.g. in case of acute shortness of breath, call emergency services on 112.

## Does COVID-19 have long-term effects?

Weeks or even months after an acute illness with COVID-19, symptoms may still persist, and new ones may appear. These include organ-specific long-term effects of treatment in intensive care. Late effects of COVID-19 may also appear independently of the severity of disease. They may also occur in patients with mild disease who were not treated in hospital.

Symptoms such as general malaise, fatigue, memory problems, and persistent exhaustion may persist in those affected. Unusual symptoms such as sudden vomiting and strong dizziness have also been reported. Many of those affected are struggling or entirely unable to cope with everyday life.

The exact causes of the long-term effects of infection are still being investigated. If you are experiencing persistent or new symptoms as a result of your infection, please inform your GP.



# Where can I find further information?



With the corona alert app (Corona-Warn-App), you can be informed anonymously and quickly if you have been in the vicinity of an infected person.

The app is available for download free of charge from the [app store](#) or from [Google Play](#).

**Your local public health authority (Gesundheitsamt)** offers information and assistance. You can find the telephone number of your local public health authority at [www.rki.de/mein-gesundheitsamt](http://www.rki.de/mein-gesundheitsamt)

**The Federal Ministry of Health (BMG)** offers centrally collated information about the coronavirus at [www.zusammengegegnocorona.de](http://www.zusammengegegnocorona.de) and about coronavirus vaccination at [www.corona-schutzimpfung.de](http://www.corona-schutzimpfung.de)

Citizen's Services Line: **030 346 465 100**

Advice for people with hearing loss:

Fax: **030 340 60 66-07**,

[info.deaf@bmg.bund.de](mailto:info.deaf@bmg.bund.de)

[info.gehoerlos@bmg.bund.de](mailto:info.gehoerlos@bmg.bund.de)

Sign language video telephone:

[www.gebaerdentelefon.de/bmg](http://www.gebaerdentelefon.de/bmg)

**The Robert Koch-Institute (RKI)** provides information about the coronavirus on its website at [www.rki.de](http://www.rki.de)

**The Federal Center for Health Education (BZgA)** has compiled answers to frequently asked questions about the coronavirus at [www.infektionsschutz.de](http://www.infektionsschutz.de)

**The Paul-Ehrlich-Institute** provides information about COVID-19 vaccines at [www.pei.de/coronavirus](http://www.pei.de/coronavirus)

You also find information in several languages at [www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/corona-virus](http://www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/corona-virus) and [www.eu-gleichbehandlungsstelle.de/corona-virus](http://www.eu-gleichbehandlungsstelle.de/corona-virus)

**The Office of Foreign Affairs** provides safety information for travellers to affected regions at: [www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit)

**The World Health Organization (WHO)** provides information on the global situation at [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

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