



Important information on the new coronavirus (Covid-19) and the social distancing and hygiene rules

New coronavirus

Updated on 9 October 2020

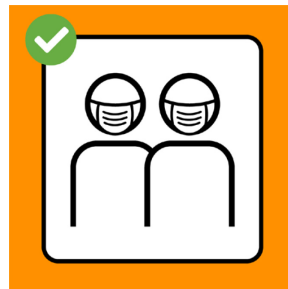
PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS.



More important than ever: stop the rise in infection numbers.



Keep your distance.



Wear a face mask if it is not possible to maintain that distance.



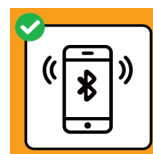
Wash your hands thoroughly.



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



To enable contact tracing, always provide your complete contact information.



To break infection chains: download and activate the SwissCovid App.



If you test positive: isolate. If you have had contact with a confirmed case: quarantine.



Do not shake hands.



Cough and sneeze into your elbow.



Only go to a doctor's office or an accident and emergency department after making an appointment by phone.

www.foph-coronavirus.ch

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 hygiene and behaviour rules as well as the sets of precautionary measures, are still key and should help to prevent new infections.

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

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.

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 at greater risk of becoming severely ill.

That means:

- People over 65
- Pregnant women
- Adults with the following underlying conditions:
 - **High blood pressure**
 - **Cardiovascular disease**
 - **Diabetes**
 - **Chronic respiratory illness**
 - **Cancer**
 - **Conditions and therapies that weaken the immune system**
 - **Serious obesity (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 behaviour 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, pregnant or do you have one of the underlying conditions listed above? This is how you can protect yourself:

The best way to protect yourself from infection is to carry on observing the hygiene and behaviour rules. The recommendations are as follows:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly with soap and water
- Keep your distance from other people (at least 1.5 metres).
- Observe the requirement to wear a mask on public transport.
- Follow the hygiene and behaviour rules, even when meeting friends or family, e.g. not using the same cutlery to serve food and not drinking from the same glass, etc.
- Avoid places frequented by large numbers of people (e.g. railway stations, public transport) and peak times (e.g. shopping on Saturdays, commuting). If you do find yourself in places frequented by large numbers of people and are unable to keep the necessary distance, we recommend you wear a face mask.

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, chest pain, fever, 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).

You are pregnant and therefore at greater risk of becoming severely ill with Covid-19. What kinds of precautions do you need to take?

If you are pregnant, you should especially protect yourself from an infection with the new coronavirus. We therefore advise you to follow our recommendations for vulnerable people (see previous answer).

Based on the Ordinance on Maternity Protection, your employer is obliged to take all steps to protect you, a pregnant woman, from contracting the new coronavirus at work. If the circumstances are such that this is impossible, the employer must offer you alternatives. If the continuation of work proves impossible, your gynaecologist may issue a prohibition of employment.

The latest findings suggest that, if you are pregnant, infection with the coronavirus might result in a more severe course of the illness, particularly if you are also overweight, older, or if you have certain underlying conditions. There are still many open questions around pregnancy and Covid-19. It is advisable to be particularly cautious when protecting mother and child.

If you have any symptoms of the disease, immediately phone your gynaecologist to discuss the necessary steps.

How is the novel coronavirus transmitted?

The novel coronavirus can be transmitted as follows:

- By **close and prolonged contact**: if you're closer than 1.5 metres to an infected person without protection (e.g. separated by a partition or both individuals wearing a face masks). The longer and closer your contact with an infected person, the greater the chances of becoming infected yourself.
- 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 **two days 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.

Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment

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

The most common symptoms are:

- Cough (usually dry)
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Sudden loss of sense of smell and/or taste

Other symptoms may include:

- Headache
- General weakness, feeling unwell
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach ache)
- Head cold
- Aching muscles
- Skin rash

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 and avoid contact with other people.**
- **Contact a doctor, hospital or other health centre and ask whether you should have a test.**
- **Read the instructions on isolation (www.bag.admin.ch/new-coronavirus-downloads) and follow them consistently.**

If you are over age 65, pregnant, or have an underlying condition, you must 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.

My child, who's under the age of 12, has symptoms. What should we do? Can it go to school or its childcare facility?

According to the latest findings, children can also get infected with the new coronavirus. However, those under age 12 are less likely than young adults and adults to have symptoms or spread the virus to other people.

Situation 1: Child and close contact have symptoms

Your child has symptoms of a possible infection with the new coronavirus and has had close contact with a person displaying symptoms of infection (a child over 12 or an adult). In this case, what you should do next depends on the test result of the close contact:

- **If the close contact's test result is positive:** Your child must stay at home and will be tested in consultation with the paediatrician, who will provide you with information on how to proceed.
- **If the close contact's test result is negative:** Your child may only return to his or her school or childcare facility following a period of 24 hours during which he or she no longer exhibits fever or if his or her cough has significantly improved.

Situation 2: Child with symptoms but without contact with a person with symptoms of Covid-19

Your child has symptoms of a possible infection with the new coronavirus but has not had close contact with a person displaying symptoms of infection (a child over 12 or an adult). In this case, what you should do depends on your child's symptoms and health:

- **Your child has mild cold symptoms** (sniffles and/or a sore throat and/or a slight cough) **and is in good general health:** Your child may continue to attend his or her school or childcare facility.
- **Your child has a fever and is in good general health:** Your child must stay at home and may only return to his or her school or childcare facility following a period of 24 hours during which he or she no longer exhibits fever. Contact your paediatrician if your child's fever persists for three days or more.
If your child has other symptoms (gastrointestinal complaints, headache, aching limbs, loss of sense of taste and/or smell), discuss what to do with the paediatrician.

- **Your child has a severe cough and is in good general health:** Your child must stay at home and may only return to his or her school or childcare facility if the cough has improved significantly within three days. Contact your paediatrician if your child's severe cough persists for more than three days.
If your child has other symptoms (gastrointestinal complaints, headache, aching limbs, loss of sense of taste and/or smell), discuss what to do with the paediatrician.
- **Your child has a fever or severe cough and/or is in poor general health:** Contact the paediatrician directly to discuss what to do.

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.

When should I get myself tested for the new coronavirus?

Do you feel ill or are you experiencing any of the symptoms of the new coronavirus? If so, stay at home, take the [coronavirus check](#) or call your doctor. Try to answer as best you can all the questions that you are asked in the online check or on the phone when you call the doctor. At the end you will be given a recommendation about what to do next which may include getting yourself tested. Stay at home until you have the test result.

Where can I get tested?

Tests are carried out by GPs, hospitals or specially set up test centres.
Take the [coronavirus check](#) to see whether you could get tested: it will tell you what you need to do.
The website www.ch.ch/coronavirus has links to the cantonal webpages where you will find information about new coronavirus and all relevant contact details.

Under what circumstances does the federal government cover the costs of a PCR test?

Since 25 June 2020 the federal government has paid the costs of the test if the criteria set by the FOPH (Swiss Federal Office of Public Health) are met. This is the case, for example, if you have symptoms matching Covid-19 and your doctor prescribes a test for infection with the new coronavirus. A notification via the SwissCovid App of a contact with an infected person is also a criterion for cost coverage.

If the FOPH's criteria for a test are not met, the federal government will not cover the costs. This may be the case, for example, if you need a test result to travel or if you are only having the test at the request of your employer.

Further information

Where can I find further information in my native language?

Visit the website migesplus.ch for additional reliable information on Covid-19 and other health issues:
<https://www.migesplus.ch/themen/neues-coronavirus-covid-19>

What events are banned?

Large events with more than 1,000 people remain banned until the end of September.

Private and public events with up to 1,000 people are allowed to take place. However, if more than 300 people attend, the venue must be divided into sectors that each hold 300 people maximum. This rule also applies for bars and clubs.

Always keep at least 1.5 metres away from other people and follow the hygiene and behaviour rules. If you can't maintain the required distance, wear a face mask.

Organisers of public events must put precautionary measures in place. Based on these measures, it might be required for you to leave your contact information. It's important in these instances that you provide accurate information; only if you do is it possible for the cantonal authorities to inform you about a possible contact with an infected person.

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 behaviour rules must always be complied with.

Are you worried or need someone to talk to?

Here you'll find information:

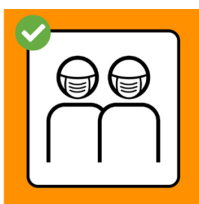
- On the internet at www.dureschnufe.ch / www.santepsy.ch / www.salutepsi.ch
- Telephone advice from the Dargebotene Hand/La main tendue/Telefono Amico Ticino e Grigioni Italiano by dialling 143

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** every day and through the night.



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. Masks are also compulsory on airplanes taking off from and landing in Switzerland.

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.

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 sufficiently protect others against infection, either. 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 masks 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.

Travelling / Arrival in Switzerland

Since 6 July 2020, travellers arriving in Switzerland from certain areas are required to go into quarantine for a period of 10 days.

This measure is based on the COVID-19 Ordinance on International Passenger Transport Measures and applies to persons entering Switzerland from countries or areas with an increased risk of infection with the coronavirus.

You must notify the competent cantonal authority within two days of your arrival in Switzerland and follow the instructions given to you by the authorities.



Anyone who evades quarantine, or who fails to comply with the duty to notify the authorities, is committing an offence under the Epidemics Act and is liable to a fine of up to CHF 10,000.

You will find the list of countries or areas with an increased risk of infection with the coronavirus, along with details of the cantonal agencies and exceptions from the quarantine requirements, here: www.bag.admin.ch/entry



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.
(www.bag.admin.ch/new-coronavirus-downloads)



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 (available in German, French, Italian, Rumantsch, Albanian, Bosnian, English, Croatian, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, Turkish, Tigrinya).

- [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?

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.

I have received an alert via the SwissCovid app about a possible infection. Will I still be paid my salary if I now stay at home because of this?

Please phone the SwissCovid Infoline. The telephone number will be displayed in the app if you receive an alert. The Infoline will provide you with information on this matter.

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