



COVID-19 epidemic precautions and conduct for older people, both at home and in nursing homes

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In younger and middle-aged people, COVID-19 infection is usually mild, a bit like having a cold. International data gathered so far have shown that the illness can be more serious in older people, especially in people over 80. Along with age, underlying conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer increase the risk of becoming more seriously ill.

What do I need to know about transmission of COVID-19 viruses?

COVID-19 viruses are transmitted via droplet infection. That means that viruses that are in the respiratory tract are carried into the air via minuscule droplets when people sneeze, cough and talk. Other people can then breathe in the viruses and/or pick them up directly via the mucous membranes (mouth, throat, eyes). That is why keeping a distance (ideally 2 metres) is an important protective measure. Alternatively, viruses can be transmitted to the face (mouth, nose and eyes) via hands and objects that people pick up. That's why it is important to wash or sanitize your hands.

How do I protect myself against COVID-19 infection – regardless of age?

Keep a distance

- No handshakes or hugs (avoid close physical contact in general). You should ideally keep 2 metres' distance from other people.

Thoroughly wash or sanitize your hands

- E.g. after contact with other people and objects in public spaces (public transport, shopping trolleys, banisters, door hands, lift buttons, etc.). **Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth without washing or sanitizing your hands first** (transmission of pathogens).
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow.
- Dispose of used tissues in a bin.

Minimise contact risks

- Carefully weigh up the risks of transport in general (train, plane, contact risk, etc.).
- Talk to grandchildren and family/friends on the phone as a temporary substitute for direct contact.
- If possible, postpone family parties and other gatherings.
- Relatives should take the same precautions as each other.

- Avoid appointments at the hospital or with your family doctor if they are just for a check-up.

Special precautions for older people?

- If possible, avoid public transport, especially at busy times.
- Go shopping outside of busy times, or get a friend or neighbour to go shopping for you.
- Go for a walk in the fresh air every day – but keep a distance from other people.
- Drink at least 1.5 litres of fluid every day. Water, tea or juice spritzers are suitable drinks. Having a wide variety of drinks makes drinking easier.
- Support your immune system:
 - Eat regularly, with a sufficient protein intake at every meal.
 - Eat fruit and vegetables every day to make sure you are getting enough vitamin C.
 - Avoid vitamin D deficiency (800 international units of vitamin D a day)
 - Get enough sleep and avoid excessive alcohol consumption.

When should I suspect COVID-19 infection?

Symptoms of an acute respiratory tract infection (e.g. symptoms of the cold with a cough or breathing difficulties) **with or without** fever.

If you experience these symptoms, we recommend that you get tested for COVID-19 infection. Please call your family doctor or nearest hospital. Do not go to a medical practice or hospital without making an appointment.

Tell them that you are calling about COVID-19 infection and that you have an increased risk of illness. Describe your symptoms.

More information?

Many thanks for your support in the fight against the coronavirus epidemic.

We recommend that you keep up to date on the website of the Federal Office of Public Health (<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov.html>) or by calling the FOPH info hotline (for general and medical questions; 24 hours a day): 058 463 00 00 where you can find out about the latest situation and the steps to take.

All canton-specific information relating to the coronavirus can also be found on the new cantonal website www.coronavirus.bs.ch/en or on the free information number for Basel-Stadt: 0800 463 666 (Monday to Friday: 07:30 to 17:00, Saturday and Sunday: 10:00 to 16:00).