



COVID-19: Instructions on isolation

Valid from: 3 February 2022

These instructions explain what you have to do if

- you have an acute illness which may be caused by the coronavirus AND/OR
- you were tested positive for coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

If you are experiencing symptoms of an acute respiratory illness¹ and/or have suddenly lost your sense of smell and/or taste or if you are experiencing other symptoms², you must **isolate at home immediately** to avoid infecting other people and should get tested without delay.

Even if you have no symptoms but have tested positive for the coronavirus, you can still infect other people and must immediately self-isolate.

These instructions explain what measures you should take to avoid transmitting the virus. You can find comprehensive information about the coronavirus at: www.coronavirus.ch/coronavirus-en. An explanatory [video](#) on isolation is also available at the website: www.bag-coronavirus.ch.



Coronavirus

If you test positive, the competent cantonal authority will contact you, but they may not be able to do so immediately. In this case, please isolate immediately and follow these instructions.

Duration of the isolation period

The test result will determine how long you have to stay in isolation:

- You have tested **positive**: the isolation can be ended after 5 days³ at the earliest if you have not had any symptoms for at least 48 hours or if the symptoms that are still present no longer justify maintaining the isolation.⁴ Please follow the instructions you have received from the competent cantonal authorities.
- You have tested **negative**: You can end isolation 24 hours after your symptoms disappear.
- You were **not tested**: You can end isolation 48 hours after your symptoms disappear, provided at least five days have passed since the first symptoms appeared.
- You had no symptoms at the time you were tested: the isolation period can be lifted five days after the test provided you do not have any symptoms that require you to remain in isolation.

If you have tested positive, you should continue to comply with the following recommendations for a few more days after the isolation period has been lifted:

- Wear a mask as recommended by the FOPH every time you come into contact with others.
- Limit contact as far as possible (in the workplace, avoid all unprotected contact with co-workers, particularly during breaks); and maintain a distance of at least 1.5 m from others.
- Avoid public places.

¹ e.g. cough, sore throat, breathing difficulties, chest pain

² fever without other cause, acute state of confusion or deterioration of health in elderly persons without other cause, muscle pain, headaches, general feeling of tiredness, head cold, gastro-intestinal symptoms (e.g. nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain), skin rashes

³ Under certain conditions, the competent cantonal authority may order a longer isolation period, or exempt people from isolation if they are key workers or if they work in a sector with marked staff shortages.

⁴ If the only symptoms that persist after five days are e.g. a slight cough or a loss of your sense of taste or smell, the isolation period can be lifted. It can take longer to regain your sense of taste and smell as the olfactory nerves and taste buds take time to recover.

Monitor your health

- Phone a doctor immediately if you are worried about your state of health or if you experience one of the following warning signs:
 - A persistent high temperature lasting several days
 - A persistent feeling of weakness lasting several days
 - Shortness of breath
 - A persistent feeling of pressure or pain in the chest
 - A feeling of confusion, never experienced before
 - Bluish coloured lips or face

If you live alone

- Ask family members, friends or a delivery service to deliver groceries and other essential products such as medicines to your home and to leave them outside your door.

If you live with others in the same household

- Stay in your room and keep the door closed. Eat meals by yourself in your room. Air the room regularly.
- Avoid any visits and contacts and only leave the room if absolutely necessary.
- When you leave your room, wear a [face mask](#) and keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres from other people
- Avoid contact with pets.
- Use your own bathroom. If this is not possible, clean all amenities (shower, toilet, washbasin) after each use with a standard household disinfectant.
- Do not share household items such as dishes, glasses, cups or kitchen utensils with other people. Wash these items after use in the dishwasher or thoroughly by hand, using washing-up liquid.
- Do not share towels or bed linen with other people.
- Ask family members, friends or a delivery service to deliver groceries and other essential products such as medicines to your home and to leave them outside your door.

Wash your hands regularly⁵

- You and the persons around you must wash hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. If these are not available, clean your hands with hand sanitiser, rubbing the liquid thoroughly into your hands until they are dry. Use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Always wash your hands before and after preparing food, before and after eating, after going to the toilet and whenever they are visibly dirty.

Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze

- Cover your mouth and nose with a paper tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw away or wash the material with which you covered your mouth and nose.
- Throw used paper tissues into a separate bin with a plastic rubbish bag in your room.

If you have to leave the house (e.g. to get tested or for a doctor's appointment)

- **Wear a [face mask](#).** If you are experiencing symptoms of an acute respiratory illness, do not wear a textile mask.
- **Wash your hands** or use hand sanitiser before leaving the house.
- **Avoid public transport.** If you are feeling well enough, drive, cycle, walk or take a taxi.

⁵ Video How to wash hands properly: <https://youtu.be/gw2Ztu0H0YY>

How to use a face mask correctly

- Wash your hands with water and soap or use hand sanitiser before putting on the mask.
- Put the face mask on carefully, ensuring that nose and mouth are covered; secure the mask so that it fits tightly against your face.
- Do not touch the mask once you have put it on. Each time you touch a used mask, e.g. when you remove it, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitiser.
- A face mask can be used for a maximum of four hours.
- Please observe the detailed information at www.bag.admin.ch/masks under [Wearing a mask correctly](#).



Masks

Observe all preventive measures

- Put all waste soiled with bodily fluids (faeces, blood, discharge) in a plastic bag in a separate bin in your room before it is disposed of with other waste.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces you touch such as bedside tables, bed frames and other bedroom furniture. Do this daily with a standard household disinfectant.

Isolation for children and parents

- The isolation rules essentially apply to children and their parents too.
- The child must not have contact with anyone outside the family during the isolation period.
- If only the child is in isolation, contact with other household members must be kept to a minimum. Whether this is feasible or not will depend on factors such as age. It is important to consider the needs of the child, especially if the child is small.
- If one parent is in isolation and the child is not, the other parent should provide childcare and be child's primary caregiver.
- If both parents are in isolation and the child is not, the measures to be adopted will depend on the age of the child and what is feasible. If external childcare cannot be organised and the child is unable to manage his or her everyday life while keeping to the hygiene and distancing rules vis-à-vis its parents, the parents must consider taking the child into isolation with them.

Social contact during isolation

- Even if you have to self-isolate, this does not mean that you have to break off all social contact. Stay in touch with friends and family via telephone, Skype etc. Tell them about what you are experiencing, and about your thoughts and feelings.
- If this is not possible, or if you still feel anxious about the situation, call the number 143 ('Die Dargebotene Hand') to talk to someone about your problems. This number is operated 24/7 and calls are free of charge.
- You can find more information online at: www.dureschnufe.ch



Dureschnufe

After the isolation period

- Continue to observe the rules on hygiene and social distancing in the 'Protect yourself and others' campaign: www.bag.admin.ch/protect-yourself-and-others.
- **Consider getting vaccinated against COVID-19:** Find out more on the website: www.bag.admin.ch/vaccination > [I have recovered from COVID-19. Should I get vaccinated?](#) and on the page of [your canton of residence](#).



Rules on hygiene and social distancing

Who do you have to inform?

Everyone you share a household with or with whom you have been in comparable⁶ regular and close contact in the 48 hours preceding the onset of symptoms, or if you did not have any symptoms, from the date the sample was taken.

⁶ This includes family members, employees such as au pairs, people from outside the home (for example grandparents or domestic staff who come to look after children at home), partners who do not live together, flatmates and people living temporarily in a household (e.g. for holidays).

What should your family and people you have had close contact with do?

It is possible that you have infected people who have been in contact with you. In this case, they will typically experience the first symptoms within 10 days.

Your contacts therefore must do the following things for a few days:

- Strictly observe the rules on hygiene and social distancing in the 'Protect yourself and others' campaign (www.bag.admin.ch/protect-yourself-and-others).
- Monitor their health. If they start showing symptoms, they should self-isolate and get tested. They must follow the present instructions on isolation.
- Wear a mask as recommended by the FOPH and when in contact with other people.
- Limit contact as far as possible (in the workplace, avoid all unprotected contact with co-workers, particularly during breaks); and maintain a distance of at least 1.5 m from others.
- Avoid public places.

Financial compensation

If you have to go into isolation because you have the coronavirus disease and have been signed off work by a doctor or the competent cantonal authority has instructed you to isolate, you are entitled to continued payment of your salary or to daily sickness benefits. But the following must be noted: If you are in isolation on the basis of instructions from the canton but do not have symptoms or are fit for work and can work from home, you must perform your work duties from home. The continued payment of salary is governed by the Swiss Code of Obligations. This obliges your employer to keep paying you for at least three weeks. Many employers take out insurance so that they can pay employees who are absent because of illness for longer periods 80% of their pay. Check with your employer and your employment contract to find out what arrangements apply to you. If you are self-employed, your entitlement to financial compensation will depend on whether you have taken out daily sickness benefit insurance.