

Q&As on coronavirus

1. How dangerous is coronavirus?

Most people experience mild symptoms, while others can become seriously ill and some people can even die. That is why it is so important that we all do everything we can to limit the spread of infection.

2. What is the difference between coronavirus and influenza?

Coronavirus and influenza virus both cause respiratory disease, but they are two different viruses and coronavirus can cause severe and acute breathing difficulties or even lung failure in some people. Because it is a new virus, it is also more serious because almost anyone can become infected, as people have no immunity and we do not have a vaccine yet.

3. What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

The most common symptoms are a sore throat, cough, fever and muscle pain. Some people develop diarrhoea and stomach pain. Some people lose their sense of taste and smell. The symptoms that people experience and how ill they become can vary widely between individuals. Children and adolescents often experience mild or minor symptoms.

4. Can you have coronavirus without experiencing any symptoms? Can you infect other people even if you do not have any symptoms yourself?

Some people may have coronavirus without developing any symptoms. This is especially true for children and young adults. Most infections occur when people have symptoms, but it is also possible to infect other people even before you experience any symptoms. We do not yet know whether people without symptoms can infect others.

5. How long are you ill for?

This will vary, but the typical disease progression appears to be as follows:

- Mild progression (most people feel ill, about eight in ten people): The symptoms pass over the course of one to two weeks and people rarely need treatment from the health service.
- Moderate progression: After 4-7 days with mild symptoms, some people develop pneumonia with breathing difficulties, worsening cough and rising fever. Some of them have to go to hospital.
- Severe progression: Same as moderate symptoms, but some people also need intensive care, including assistance with breathing. People with moderate to severe symptoms can experience symptoms for 3-6 weeks. A few of those who become severely ill die.

6. How can you become infected?

The disease is transmitted in the same way as the common cold and influenza, through the virus being transmitted via the respiratory tract of an infected person, in three ways:

- Through the air by the infected person sneezing or coughing, causing the virus to be inhaled by or come into contact with the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth of people standing nearby.
- By direct contact when the infected person has the virus on their hands and transmits it through contact with other people who, again via their hands, then bring it into contact with the mucous membranes of their eyes, nose or mouth.
- By indirect contact when the virus has been transmitted to furniture, objects or contact surfaces (such as door handles, keyboards, telephones, etc.) through sneezing/coughing or through the infected person touching objects that other people subsequently touch.

7. How can I avoid getting infected?

The most important thing to remember is to maintain social distancing and good hand and cough hygiene. The virus can be transmitted from the hands via the mouth, eyes and nose. Avoid touching your face. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, especially after coughing/sneezing, after visits to the toilet, before cooking and before eating, or if your hands are visibly dirty. Remember to wash your thumbs, between your fingers and the backs of your hands and your wrists for a total of at least 20 seconds.

8. If I have had coronavirus and recovered, will I always be immune from the virus?

Coronavirus is a brand new virus and there is a lot we do not know about it yet. However, we believe that anyone who is infected and recovers will be protected or at least have some immunity. We do not know how long this protection will last.

9. Will taking antibiotics help against the virus?

No, antibiotics are only effective against bacteria, not viruses. Coronavirus is a virus and antibiotics should not be used to prevent or treat the disease.

10. Are any medicines or vaccines available for coronavirus?

No vaccine against coronavirus is currently available, but research is underway to develop one. Research is also being conducted into whether other existing medications can help treat coronavirus.

11. What should I do if I think I have coronavirus? When should I seek medical attention?

Contact your GP as soon as you think you may be infected with coronavirus. If you develop a high fever and breathing difficulties, contact your GP or the emergency medical centre as soon as possible (telephone 116 117). Only call 113 if you are experiencing very severe symptoms.

12. Can I just go to the emergency medical centre if I think I am infected?

No. Call your GP or the emergency medical centre (telephone 116 117) and you will be told what you should do. This is important in order to prevent the spread of infection.

13. I feel ill and want to be tested. Where can I be tested?

Contact your GP or the emergency medical centre (telephone 116 117). They will decide whether you should be tested. The healthcare service does not have sufficient capacity to test everyone who wants to be tested, but efforts are being made to increase the testing capacity.

14. If I live on my own and become ill, who can do my food shopping for me? Who will look after me if my health deteriorates?

If you live on your own and you become ill, it is important that you contact your family, friends, colleagues or neighbours and tell them that you are ill and ask them to help you with your food shopping. If you do not have anyone who can help you, it is important that you contact your GP and tell them that you are ill, that you live on your own and that you need help. You can also get help from your local municipal authority or local district, and there are many voluntary organisations that can help too.

15. If someone in the family falls ill, how can we isolate them? Our space is so limited.

It can be difficult to completely isolate someone in the family when you have limited space, but if you have a separate bedroom, the person who is ill should remain in that room at all times, while other people stay in the living room and the kitchen. It is important to maintain good hygiene and clean the toilet and bathroom when the person who is ill has used it and to wash plates, glasses and cutlery immediately.

What everyday things can I do?

1. Why is different advice being given in different countries? Which advice should I follow?

Initiatives and experiences from one country may not necessarily be transferable to another country. The advice being given in Norway is based on research, the information we have available at the present time and conditions in Norway. The initiatives change as new information becomes available and as the situation in Norway changes. It is therefore important to keep up to date and to follow the advice that is given by the health authorities.

2. Can I go to the shops or the pharmacy?

If you are healthy, you can go to shops and the pharmacy. Avoid touching surfaces that other people have touched, and maintain a good distance from other people in the store. Stay at home if you are experiencing any symptoms. In this case, you must then ask someone to do your shopping for you.

3. Is it dangerous to use public transport?

It is not dangerous to use public transport, but if you can avoid using it, it will reduce the risk of you becoming infected. It is better to cycle or walk if you can.

4. What should I do if I cannot buy any hand sanitiser in the shops or pharmacies?

Washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water is more effective than using hand sanitiser.

5. Can my friends and family still visit me?

People can come to visit you, but only a few people at a time and preferably the same people, not different people each time. It is best to meet outdoors if you can. If you do meet other people, you should maintain a good distance (at least 1-2 metres). It is best to talk to each other over the phone or via a video call. You will then avoid the possibility of infecting other people or becoming infected yourself. This applies particularly if you are in the risk group or if you have friends or family in the risk group.

6. Is it safe to open parcels or letters? What should I do before I touch my post?

Yes, it is safe. There is little chance of becoming infected by touching letters or parcels. However, it is a good idea to wash your hands when you have been outside your house.

7. Can I give my three best friends a hug?

No, you should not hug or shake hands with anyone else other than the people you live with.

8. How should I clean the house and wash clothes?

You can use ordinary detergents to clean your home and wash your clothes and fabrics. Remember to wash surfaces that are frequently touched every day particularly thoroughly and often - the kitchen worktop, table, door handles, fridge door, cupboard doors, etc.

9. Can children play with each other or spend time together? What about adolescents?

Children and adolescents can be with their siblings in the normal way. This also applies to children and adolescents from divorced families who have more than one home.

As regards contact with other people, you should reduce the number of people you have contact with as much as possible. Try to have one or two regular friends who you play with and stick with the same friends throughout this period. This also applies to adolescents. Keep at least 1 metre away from other people. You can keep in contact with other people in other ways, such as by telephone or video calls.

It is better to meet outdoors than indoors. Limit yourself to small groups of no more than five people, and limit the time you spend with them to a few hours. Avoid playgrounds and other places with a lot of children or other people. Limit overnight stays during this period. Wash your hands frequently before, during and after playing. Maintain good cough hygiene.

Children and adolescents with symptoms of respiratory infection must be kept at home and should not be with other children or adolescents outside the family. This also applies if they are experiencing mild symptoms. Children and adolescents in home isolation or home quarantine should not meet with other children or adolescents from outside their household.

Risk groups

1. Who is at risk?

You are considered to be at risk if you:

- are over 65 or
- are an adult with heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer or high blood pressure.
- Adults who are obese or who smoke may also be at risk.

2. Is it dangerous to visit grandparents?

If the grandparents are at risk, you should not visit them unless absolutely necessary. You should keep in touch with them by phone or video call instead.

3. Is coronavirus more dangerous for someone who has diabetes and high blood pressure than someone with diabetes only?

Older people with risk factors are at particular risk of developing severe symptoms with COVID-19 disease, and the risk of serious illness increases with age and the number of risk factors.

4. What should I do if I am in the risk group?

Everyone in the risk group must be particularly thorough with their hygiene and maintain a safe distance from other people. In addition to the general advice concerning hygiene and social distancing, you should follow the advice given below:

- Make sure you have the medicines you need available. Continue taking your regular medication, and only make changes in consultation with your GP. Attend your agreed appointments with the health service unless you have been told otherwise.
- You should try to keep fit by walking, but you should avoid places where there are lots of other people.
- Limit your use of public transport if possible, especially during the rush hour.
- Avoid interacting with people who are experiencing the symptoms of respiratory disease.
- Avoid looking after younger children, as young children often show little or no symptoms of COVID-19 and can infect those who are at risk.
- If anyone you live with does not feel well (especially if you suspect they might have COVID-19), you should limit your interaction with them as much as possible. If possible, you should live and sleep in separate rooms, and use a separate bathroom/toilet. If this is not possible, it is important to keep your distance from them and to use separate towels in the bathroom/toilet and separate toiletries.
- In consultation with their employer, employees in risk groups should consider whether they need to adapt the way in which they work based on their individual risk. Sick leave is not recommended unless you are unable to make alternative working arrangements.
- Keep up to date with the situation by following your local media, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health's website and/or helsenorge.no

5. I live with someone who is in the risk group. What should I do to avoid infecting them?

Advice for relatives of people who are at particular risk:

- Follow the general advice concerning hygiene and social distancing.
- If you experience symptoms of respiratory infection or do not feel well, keep your distance. If possible, live and sleep in separate rooms and use a separate bathroom/toilet. If this is not possible, it is important to keep your distance from them and to use separate towels in the bathroom/toilet and separate toiletries.

Using ordinary health services

1. Is it dangerous for me to attend an appointment at the hospital?

If you have an appointment at a hospital, it is important that you attend. Hospitals have introduced strict measures to avoid infection on their premises. If you are in quarantine or experiencing respiratory symptoms, please call and tell them. The department you have the appointment with will tell you what you should do.

2. Remember that you are entitled to an interpreter when you attend appointments with the health service.

You should not take anyone else with you to your appointment unless absolutely necessary. This is in order to protect other patients and healthcare professionals from infection.

3. Can I go to my GP now?

Do not be afraid to contact your GP or attend appointments. If you are in quarantine or experiencing respiratory symptoms, please call and tell them. Some GPs may offer video consultation, but if your GP thinks it is important, they will ask you to come to the surgery for a consultation. Remember that you are entitled to an interpreter when you attend appointments with the health service.

4. Are vaccines and medical check-ups being carried out for children in the same way as before?

Yes! It is important that children are vaccinated in the normal way. It is particularly important that we avoid outbreaks of other diseases in these difficult times. It is also important to attend check-ups in the normal way. However, if you or your child are ill or in quarantine, call the health centre or the GP's surgery where you have your appointment to let them know and arrange a new appointment. To reduce the risk of infection, only one parent should attend appointments with your child. Remember that you have the right to an interpreter when you interact with the health service.

Coronavirus, pregnancy and breastfeeding

1. Is coronavirus harmful to pregnant women?

There is currently little evidence to suggest that pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to becoming seriously ill with novel coronavirus. The advice for preventing infection in pregnant women is the same as for the general population.

Pregnant women who have a chronic illness or pregnancy complications should discuss with their GP whether there is any reason for them to be extra careful and whether they need to adapt their workplace in any way. Sick leave is not recommended unless it is not possible to adapt your work.

2. If a mother becomes infected, will her child be taken away from her after birth and isolated from her?

If you are diagnosed with coronavirus just before or during childbirth, you will be given your own room, the staff will wear protective equipment and it may also be appropriate for you to wear a face mask. You can be with your child after the birth unless you are seriously ill, or your child is very premature or ill. Maternity and neonatal wards in Norway are ready to look after you and your child, and have established appropriate procedures to help and care for you in the best way possible.

3. Can I breastfeed if I have coronavirus?

Healthy mothers who are not experiencing any symptoms of respiratory infection or diagnosed coronavirus can breastfeed. Mothers with a respiratory infection or who have been diagnosed with coronavirus can also breastfeed, but they should follow some additional advice in order to prevent infection:

- Practise good hand hygiene whenever you are in close contact with your child. Always wash your hands thoroughly before breastfeeding.
- Avoid touching your breasts, in the same way that you should not touch your face. This is to avoid transmitting the infection from your hands to your breasts, and then passing it onto your child. If necessary, wash your breasts with soap and water; do not use alcohol.
- You should not cough or sneeze on your child. Keep a short distance away except when breastfeeding. If you cough or sneeze while breastfeeding, try to cough/sneeze away from your child and into a paper tissue which you then discard.
- Clean your house regularly and clean/disinfect surfaces that you have come into contact with, such as door handles, mobile phones, etc.
- It is not recommended that face masks be worn around the home unless this is recommended by a healthcare professional in exceptional situations involving particularly vulnerable mothers/children.
- Babies can be passed freely between other people in the household who are not experiencing any symptoms.
- If you have come into contact with the health service, you should follow the advice that they give you.

Spørsmål og svar om
koronaviruset
Språk: Engelsk
Opprettet: 04/20 Endret:

