About coronavirus/COVID-19

Frequently asked questions and answers from the Danish Health Authority about coronavirus/COVID-19.

1 What are novel coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronavirus is a family of viruses that can cause symptoms of a common cold but can also cause more severe respiratory infections.

Severe cases were seen due to infections with the SARS-coronavirus (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which caused a large disease outbreak in 2003, and the MERS-coronavirus (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), which has been the cause of severe pulmonary infections on the Arabian peninsula since 2012.

The outbreak with novel coronavirus started in China in December 2019, and spread quickly to neighbouring countries and subsequently to the rest of the world, including Denmark. WHO declared the situation to be a pandemic on 11 March 2020, meaning an epidemic on several continents.

WHO has named the disease caused by the novel coronavirus COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019).

The number of new global cases is continuously updated and can be seen on the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control’s pages dedicated to the outbreak. You can follow the development in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Denmark on the Danish Health Authority’s or on Statens Serum Institute’s websites.

2 How serious is COVID-19?

Most people have only a small risk of becoming seriously ill if they become infected with novel coronavirus, and particularly children and adolescents seem to be less affected and have mild cases of the disease.

Statistics show that approx. 80% have mild symptoms, approx. 15% become seriously ill and require hospitalisation, while approx. 5% require treatment in an intensive care unit. The mortality rate (Case Fatality Rate) in Denmark is approx. 5%. However, the real mortality rate is probably much lower if all infected (Case Infection Rate) are included, i.e. those who are not tested because they have no or mild symptoms.
The vast majority of serious cases are elderly people, especially those over 80 years old, and people with chronic diseases and infirmities. However, it is important to bear in mind that most people recover — including those who suffer from illnesses or conditions that supposedly should put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

3 How does novel coronavirus spread and can I be contagious without symptoms? 

Current knowledge indicates that novel coronavirus is not airborne, but transmitted through droplet and contact spread:

- **Droplet spread**
  The virus spreads from person to person through droplets from e.g. the respiratory tract coughed or sneezed out by an infected person. As droplets from the respiratory tract fall to the ground within 1-2 metres droplet spread is prevented by keeping your distance.

- **Contact spread**
  Transmission through an infected surface that is touched by an uninfected person, who then touches their nose, eyes or mouth. The risk of contact spread is reduced by maintaining proper hand hygiene, contact-free solutions and thorough cleaning of contact points such as door handles, etc.

> Watch our video on how novel coronavirus spreads (in Danish)

The incubation period, i.e. the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease, is between 1 and 14 days. Those infected can spread the novel coronavirus for several days before their own symptoms start (also known as presymptomatic transmission).

However, the greatest virus contamination seems to occur during the first days with symptoms and the greatest risk of transmission is believed to come from symptomatic people who cough, sneeze, etc.

Since people with no respiratory symptoms only occasionally cough or sneeze, contact spread is the major source of contamination from infected people without any symptoms of COVID-19. During normal conversation, the drop spread from infected people without any symptoms is negligible, but the risk of drop spread is increased when people sing, talk loudly, shout, or sneeze or cough uncontrollably, etc.

4 Can I become infected with novel coronavirus more than once, and can you tell if I have been previously infected? 

Our current knowledge suggests that most people develop immunity to the novel coronavirus, but to what extent and how long it lasts is not yet known. We do know that most other viruses that cause upper respiratory tract infections, like the flu and other types of coronavirus, that one is immune for a period of time, but it differs for how long.

Tests have been developed that can detect antibodies to novel coronavirus in the blood of people who have previously been infected with COVID-19. But since we do not know to what extent the antibodies protect, the test cannot predict whether you can be infected again. Furthermore, it is relevant to realise that the reliability of the test depends on several factors, including how much time has passed from you became ill and until you took the test.

The test requires either a regular blood test or a blood sample from a small prick on your finger.

Currently, the Danish healthcare system does not allow testing for antibodies unless as part of a research project and government monitoring, or in particular situations following a specific medical assessment.

You can, however, buy antibody tests, but the quality of these tests varies considerably.

Overall, we do not recommend that you allow your conduct to be influenced by the results of an antibody test, i.e. you should continue to follow our general advice on preventing the spread of infection regardless.
Can the novel coronavirus be transmitted via surfaces and food?

The survival time of novel coronavirus on surfaces depends on various factors, such as the level of virus, type of surface, temperature, humidity, etc. For practical purposes, we anticipate a survival time of 48 hours.

However, it is important to bear in mind, that you can’t be infected merely by touching objects with virus on them. Infection requires that the virus comes into contact with the mucous membranes in your mouth, nose or eyes.

Therefore, you shouldn’t be afraid to touch things, if you maintain proper hand hygiene and are aware of your hands. We recommend that you wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, including when you come home from outside and avoid touching your face when your hands are not clean. Learn more in Wash your hands often or use hand sanitiser.

Handling money can be compared with touching other points of contact in public – like doorknobs, elevator buttons, etc. – which are associated with a risk of contaminating your hands. You should avoid points of contact and consider using contact-free payment wherever possible. The most important thing is to make sure that you maintain proper hand hygiene.

Regarding transmission through food, please see the Danish Food Administration’s questions and answers about novel coronavirus and food. (The site is in Danish).

Diagnosis, treatment and vaccination

Novel coronavirus can be detected in a mucous sample collected from the lower respiratory tract if the individual has signs of pneumonia, or by a test taken with a special swab from the throat if the person has upper respiratory symptoms or is asymptomatic. Typically, novel coronaviruses can be detected in the respiratory tract 1-2 days before symptoms develop, sometimes earlier.

Properly performed at the right time during the disease (i.e. in patients with clear upper respiratory symptoms within 5-7 days after the onset of symptoms), it is estimated that 5-10% of the tests will show false negative results – i.e. that the test is negative even though the individual is actually infected. The sensitivity of the test is more uncertain in people with mild symptoms. Below 1% will be false positive results – i.e. the test is positive even though the individual is not infected.

At this time, we can only treat symptoms of COVID-19, and not the disease itself, and there is no available vaccine to protect against novel coronavirus.

Pharmaceutical authorities all over the world support clinical research and pharmaceutical companies in their efforts to produce medicine and a vaccine to protect against novel coronavirus. The Danish Medicines Agency is prepared to approve new treatment or a vaccine as quickly as possible without compromising safety.

The Danish Medicines Authority follows this development closely and continuously updates their list of studies and research about medication for treatment of and vaccines against novel coronavirushappening on a global level.

Read more about the development of medicine for COVID-19 on the Danish Medicines Authority’s website (in Danish)

ABOUT THE OUTBREAK IN DENMARK

What is the status of the outbreak in Denmark?

The first case of COVID-19 in Denmark was detected on 27 February 2020. Immediately thereafter, the number of infected people increased, but closing down the country resulted in a significant drop in the number of new cases and the epidemic curve deflected.
Based on this positive development, the Government announced on 6 April 2020 that it would commence a gradual and controlled reopening of selected sectors in Denmark. You can read about the various phases of the reopening on the joint website for the Danish authorities.

The Danish Health Authority issues regular status reports on the epidemic. The latest is COVID-19 i Danmark – Status på 15. Epidemiuge, (in Danish).

You can follow the number of confirmed cases in Denmark on our website, which is updated daily.

Furthermore, Statens Serum Institut frequently publishes status reports on the situation, including the rate at which the coronavirus infection is spreading in Denmark, and highlights selected topics.

2 How is the spread of infection monitored in the Danish population?  

During the controlled reopening of the community, an early and real-time monitoring of the COVID-19 epidemic is needed to ensure that we have the best basis for assessing the development of the epidemic.

Statens Serum Institut monitors the outbreak and continuously expands its monitoring. Monitoring includes disease and virus surveillance as well as follows sickness absence data and contact patterns. The COVID-19 surveillance and disease data forms the basis for mathematical models and analyses used to forecasts and track the development of the epidemic.

3 What are the Danish Health Authority’s goals, strategies and responses?

The fact that the epidemic is currently at a standstill gives us a unique opportunity to put in place a more long-term, sustainable and effective strategy for dealing with COVID-19 without compromising the well-being and mental health of the population. However, the disease itself and the ideal response measures are not entirely mapped out yet, and we will, therefore, continue to adjust our response to - and management of - the disease as new knowledge and experience emerges.

It is still essential to prevent the spread of infection by isolating people with symptoms, tracking close contacts, and maintaining proper hygiene and physical distancing. We must support each other in adhering to the general advice, which we must all incorporate into our lives.

It is not possible to completely eradicate novel coronavirus. Still, we can try to keep it in check and ensure that people at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 are not infected. We do this both by effective prevention, and by breaking the chains of infection by tracking down those who have been close to someone infected with novel coronavirus.

In addition, we will still need extra capacity in the healthcare system, to be utilised if the number of hospitalised COVID-19 patients increases again. The additional capacity must be maintained in parallel with the increasing overall activity in the healthcare services.

You can read more in Danish about the status and our strategy in our publication COVID-19 i Danmark – Status på 15. epidemiuge.

4 What is the health authorities’ prognosis for the epidemic?

Statens Serum Institut estimates that we will be able to keep the epidemic in check by maintaining the current measures on hand hygiene, physical distancing, rapid detection and isolation of the sick, and infection detection, which will allow us to prevent an uncontrolled spread of infection.

When you reopen sections of society, there will be an increased risk of the spread of infection, and we will probably see a rise in the number of cases of people infected with the novel coronavirus. Therefore, we must continue avoid the spread of infection and preventing too many people from getting sick at the same time. Consequently, we will continue to focus on maintaining our general advice on self-isolation during illness, proper hygiene and cleaning and on maintaining social distancing in public.
THE DANISH HEALTH AUTHORITY’S FIVE GENERAL PIECES OF ADVICE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

1 What is the best way to prevent the spread of infection?

The most important thing about preventing the spread of infection with COVID-19 is that people with symptoms self-isolate in their homes or are isolated in a hospital. Then, in order or priority, comes hygiene - i.e. coughing into your sleeve, washing your hands or using hand sanitisers, avoiding touching contact points, and cleaning. And in third place keeping physical distance in public spaces, avoiding crowds and using physical barriers when close contact is inevitable.

In order of priority, the key elements in preventing the spread of infection are:

1. isolation of people with symptoms and tracking close contacts
2. hygiene, focusing on cough etiquette, hand hygiene and contact points
3. limiting contact, focusing on distance, frequency, duration and physical barriers.

You can learn more about how the infection spreads under ‘How does novel coronavirus spread and can I be contagious without symptoms?’

Once we know how novel coronavirus spread, we know how best to protect ourselves and each other against infection.

→ Watch our video on how novel coronavirus spreads. (In Danish)

The best way you can help prevent the spread of infection is by following our five general recommendations and incorporating them into everything you do, both at home, in public school and in the workplace. Adults should assist children, so they are able to follow the recommendation as closely as possible.

You can read more about our five general recommendations below as well as in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

2 Advice #1: Wash your hands often or use hand sanitiser

Proper hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent contact spread.

Hand washing and hand sanitisers are equally effective. However, hand washing is always recommended if your hands are visibly dirty, wet, after you’ve gone to the toilet, changed nappies, and before you handle food. The reason behind this is that hand sanitisers only work properly when your hands are dry and not visibly dirty.

If you do not have access to soap and water or hand sanitiser, you can use wet wipes as an alternative, for example in connection with travel. The wet wipes must contain glycerol and have an alcohol concentration of between 70-85% and should be able to keep your skin moist for at least 30 seconds. It is important to moisturise your hands with e.g. hand cream to keep your skin from cracking, prevent dry skin and the development of eczema.

How to wash your hands (the whole process should take about 60 seconds):

- remove any finger rings, bracelets and watches
- wet your hands and wrist before applying soap (preferably in lukewarm, not too hot water) - if you use soap on dry hands it can irritate the skin
- lather your hands and wrists thoroughly with soap
- scrub your hands thoroughly for at least 15 seconds, and lather your fingertips, thumbs, between your fingers, the backs of your hands, your palms and wrists
- rinse off the soap thoroughly
- pat your hands completely dry using a towel/paper towel. We recommend using your own towel or disposable wipes/paper towels
- moisturise your hands with hand cream to prevent your hands drying out due to frequent handwashing.


Remember to help your children maintain good hand hygiene – in particular how to wash and moisturise their hands properly. Parents and adults should pay particularly close attention to how the individual child reacts to frequent handwashing. Approximately 15-20% of all children have particularly sensitive skin and for someone children, hand eczema can develop into a chronic condition. Children should use hand cream after each handwash or as often as possible. We recommend using an unscented, rich moisturising cream (40-70%).


**How to use hand sanitisers:**
- your hands should be dry and not visibly dirty
- apply the sanitiser to the palm of one hand in an amount that can keep your skin moist for approximately 30 seconds
- rub the sanitiser over all the surfaces of your hands, including your fingertips, thumbs, the space between your fingers, the backs of your hands, your palms and wrists
- keep rubbing with sanitiser until your hands are dry.

Antiseptic hand sanitiser products should be ethanol-based with a content of 70-85% alcohol, and 1-3% glycerol to prevent drying of the skin. We advise against making your own hand sanitiser. Homemade sanitisers can be unhealthy to breathe in, can irritate the skin and eyes, is dangerous if swallowed (e.g. by children in the home) and can be flammable. Go to the Danish Environmental Protection Agency’s website to learn more about hand sanitisers and products.

It is safe for children to use hand sanitiser products, but keep them out of reach and only use them when there is an adult on hand to assist/help the child.

**Proper hand hygiene is particularly important in the following situations:**
- after going to the bathroom
- before cooking
- before eating
- after blowing your nose
- after changing your baby's diaper
- when you come home from work, shopping, etc.

We recommend that you avoid touching your face to prevent the virus from entering your eyes, nose or mouth. And never touch your face with dirty hands. You can read about how the virus spreads under "How does novel coronavirus spread and can I be contagious without symptoms?"

---

**Advice #2: Cough or sneeze into your sleeve**

Proper cough etiquette prevents droplet spread as well as stops the virus being transmitted from your hands to surfaces and contact points that are touched frequently and by many different people who might then be infected.

Thus, we recommend that you:

- cough into a disposable tissue and wash or disinfect your hands afterwards. Or cough into your sleeve
- if you cough into the palm of your hands, you must wash or disinfect your hands afterwards.

Download the poster Prevent infection or learn more in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

---

**Advice #3: Avoid handshakes kisses on the cheek and hugs**

By avoiding close and physical contact, you can eliminate both droplet spread, e.g. from hugs and contact spread from shaking hands with someone who is infected, whether they have symptoms or not.
This is why we recommend that you limit physical contact with others – e.g. handshakes, hugs and cuddles – and that you maintain social distancing, even when you have no symptoms.

5 **Advice #4: Clean thoroughly – at home and in the workplace**

The risk of contact spread increases dramatically when you touch contact point and surfaces that are touched by many people – such as door handles, bannisters, light switches, pushbuttons, keyboards, armrests, table edges, toys, tools, utensils, taps, toilets, etc.

It is therefore vital that you clean contact point frequently and thoroughly. Ordinary cleaning – using ordinary methods and cleaning products – is generally sufficient. However, if you wish to be extra careful, you can disinfect surfaces etc. when you’ve cleaned them. Always use disinfectant products intended for surface disinfection. You should not use hand sanitisers as they often contain glycerol, which greases the surface, or high-alcohol content ethanol, which evaporates too quickly to be effective.

We generally consider the risk of infection via textiles/clothing to be limited and advice you to follow the washing instructions on the garment. In households where someone is ill from COVID-19, you should wash towels, bed linen and underwear at a minimum of 60 degrees.

You can learn more in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

6 **Advice #5: Keep your distance and ask others to be considerate**

Droplets containing virus particles fall to the ground within 1-2 metres when they are spread by, for example, coughing and sneezing. Therefore, you can prevent droplet spread effectively by keeping your distance.

During normal conversation, there is a low risk of infection from infected individuals who have no symptoms. However, certain situations involve a higher risk of infection. However, in exceptional circumstances, we recommend that you keep a distance of two metres. There is no clear evidence of a specific distance requirement in the public space, and current recommendations vary among international authorities.

Based on an overall assessment of current documentation, international recommendations and experiences, we recommend the following:
- keep at least a 1-metre distance between people in the public space
- however, keep at least a 2-metres distance in situations where there might be an increased risk of droplet spread or where there are special considerations, e.g.:
  - if you are anxious about your own or someone else’s respiratory symptoms, e.g. if you are on your way home from work and feel unwell or if you think someone else looks like they have a cold etc.
  - when visiting nursing homes, hospitals, persons at higher risk, etc.
  - during activities involving heavy exhalation, such as singing, shouting, lectures, plays, physical exertion, etc.
  - during activities in motion e.g. roller coasters
  - when staying in confined spaces with limited room, poor ventilation, etc. – such as basements, shafts, etc.

You can learn more in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

7 **The reasoning behind the Danish Health Authority’s general advice**

The Danish Health Authority has continuously updated its advice on the prevention of the spread of infection as new knowledge of COVID-19 has emerged and international recommendations have been updated. Further, we have continuously sought to adapt our recommendations to the advice and risk assessment we have received from experts as well as national and international experience with which initiatives work best and have the most impact.
ON FACE MASKS

1  When should I use a face mask?  

Wearing a face mask can supplement other infection prevention measures in situations where it is difficult to keep your distance.

Use a face mask in the following situations:
- If you are infected or at risk of being infected with a novel coronavirus and have to leave your home, e.g. because you need to be tested
- If you are travelling by public transport
- If you are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and find yourself in situations where it is difficult for either you or others to keep a distance of 2 metres, for example in a shopping centre, at a party or a cultural event.
- If you visit a person at higher risk, who you do not live with, for example a person in a nursing home, consider wearing a face mask in those situations when you cannot keep a distance of at least 2 metres, for example when the person needs care.
- In large crowds, for example at demonstrations and parades, where it is not easy to keep your distance.

Always carry a face mask with you, so you can wear it when needed. Always try to follow the general guidelines: stay at home if you are sick, keep a distance of 1 or 2 metres to others and ensure good hygiene – also when you are wearing a face mask.

2  I am at higher risk – in which situations should I or my loved ones wear a face mask?  

For people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, we recommend that both they themselves and others keep a distance of at least 2 metres.

In ordinary everyday life, it can be difficult to keep a sufficient distance without limiting your daily routines and social life to an unacceptable degree.

Wearing a face mask can supplement other infection prevention measures in situations where it is difficult to keep your distance.

Wear a face mask if you are at higher risk and go to places where there are many people. Typical examples would be:
- In shops or shopping malls
- At parties or family gatherings
- At museums or cultural events
- At the pharmacy or at the doctor
- If you need to be with people who have difficulty keeping a distance of 2 metres

Always carry a face mask with you when you move in public areas so you can put it on if you need to. Always use a factory-made CE-certified disposable face mask.

You do not need to wear a face mask at home.

If, for example, you as a relative have to be with a person who is at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 – with whom you do not live or have regular close contact – and you cannot keep a distance of 2 metres from that person, for
example because that person needs care and attention, you can consider wearing on a face mask to protect that person.

As a rule, you should always, as far as possible, keep a distance of 2 metres from someone at higher risk. If this is not possible, you must assess the situation (i.e., how close will you be getting to the person), as well as of the person’s situation (i.e. the degree of increased risk), and base your decision on whether to wear a face mask or not during your visit on that assessment.

It will typically be relevant for you to wear a face mask in situation where, for example, you have to visit a frail and elderly relative in a nursing home. If, on the other hand, you and your children are going to visit a healthy and self-reliant elderly person who has no chronic illnesses, you do not have to wear masks to hug that person.

You should also consider the person who is at higher risk’s own wishes on whether they want you to wear a face mask or not.

If you live with someone at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, you do not need to wear a face mask when you are at home.

### Which type of face mask should I choose?

Factory-made CE-certified disposable face masks have a documented high degree of filtration. And this is why we recommend that you use only CE-approved masks if you are infected or at risk of being infected with novel coronavirus, if you are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or if you have to be with someone who is at higher risk. The same applies to the use of face masks in liberal professions, e.g. hairdressers, where frequent or prolonged face-to-face contact is unavoidable.

In other situations, you can use fabric face masks as an alternative to disposable face masks. Face visors can be an alternative to face masks in special situations, for example when someone cannot use a face mask or when it is important that the face is visible. People with certain disorders, such as eczema on the face, allergies or conditions that prevent a face mask from fitting tightly to the face can use a visor as an alternative to a face mask. You can also use a visor when you communicate with people who are either hearing or visually impaired or where someone has to be able to read your lips. The visor allows others to see your face and does not mute the sound as much as a face mask does.

You can also use a visor in situations where it is important that your face is clearly visible – for example when talking to a child or a person with dementia and the like.

When you go out in public areas, you can use a type I face mask, which are disposable face masks produced according to industry-quality standards.

The concentration of virus particles in the public space will typically be low and the risk of infection limited. The difference between the various types of face masks will therefore be of no practical importance, and a type I face mask will be sufficient both to protect others from possible infection from you and to protect you from possible infection from others.

In the healthcare system, where people are sick, there is a higher risk of infection, and therefore the recommendations for the healthcare system are different. We recommend that type II face masks and respiratory protection masks (FFP2, FFP3, etc.) are reserved for use in the healthcare and elderly sector.

### How to stop your glasses fogging up

For people with glasses, wearing a face mask can lead to their lenses fogging up, reducing their vision. It can also increase the risk of contact spread if you repeatedly touch your glasses. Here are some tips on how to prevent your glasses from fogging up:

- choose a face mask that fits tightly against your nose, e.g. a face mask with a metal strip that you can pinch to mould the mask to the shape of your nose.
- wash your glasses with lukewarm water and a few drops of washing up liquid every morning and evening. Then dry them with a microfibre cloth. Soap reduces the risk of fog from sticking to the lenses.
- position the face mask as close to your eyes as possible and wear your glasses a little further down your nose. You can find more helpful advice on several websites.

### What to do if you wear hearing aids, or need to communicate with someone with a hearing impairment

If you wear behind-the-ear hearing aids or have a hearing loss, wearing a face mask can be challenging. A face mask with elastic ear loops might be difficult to use as it may prove hard to fasten properly or you might run the risk of misplacing your hearing aid when you remove the face mask. Consider using a face visor or a face mask that goes around the head rather
than of over the ears instead. You may also find that face masks muffles the sound and make it difficult to read someone’s lips. When you are with someone who has a hearing loss, please
- avoid any background noise
- speak loudly, slowly and clearly
- rephrase the sentence if the person with hearing loss does not understand what you are saying
  write instead of talk. Use pen and paper or the note app on your phone or tables etc

You can find more advice on several websites.

---

4 How do I use a face mask correctly?  

It is important that you use a face mask correctly. Improper use can lead to increased spread of infection, primarily via contact spread, if, for example, you touch the face mask and in this way get virus on your hands. Also, remember to continue to follow the general advice on social distancing and hygiene so that the face mask does not give you a false sense of security.

You should never reuse disposable face masks. Always deposit used disposable face masks directly into the waste bin after use. Do not touch the face mask itself - only touch the elastic ear loops.

The Danish Health Authority has released pamphlets, posters and films that guide you on how to use a face mask correctly. You will find them on our website.

Learn more about fabric masks on WHO’s website.

---

5 Who are exempt from using face masks in public transport? Special conditions and exceptions for the use of face masks

A face mask must not cause significant discomfort to the wearer or affect your ability to function. As a rule, face masks should only be worn by people who can put it on and take it off themselves and where the mask fits tightly to the face.

The Danish Health Authority has determined that the following people may be exempt from wearing a face mask in public transport:
- children under the age of 12
- people with difficulty breathing, reduced levels of consciousness or people with physical or mental impairments that prevent them from removing the face mask themselves
- people who have significant discomfort with wearing a face mask

Please keep in mind that there may be a good reason why a person is not wearing a face mask, and that the cause is not always visible.

Please see our website for more information on face masks.

---

6 Why should I use a face mask?  

The best way to prevent droplet infection with novel coronavirus is by keeping your distance from each other, and by making sure that infected people, and people at risk of being infected, such as close contacts, isolate themselves. However, you may not even realise that you are infected as it typically takes between 1 and 14 days before symptoms develop, and many people do develop symptoms at all. Therefore, you do not necessarily know that you are infected when you move among other people.

In general, we recommend that you keep a distance of at least 1 metre to other people.
For people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, we recommend that you keep a distance of 2 metres. People at higher risk must take special care – and we must take special care of them. So be particularly considerate if you know that someone you are with has an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 if they become infected.

When it is not possible to keep your distance, and many people are gathered in the same place, there is a higher risk of the spread of infection. In situations where it is difficult to keep your distance wearing a face mask can be a good supplement to prevent the spread of infection. Face masks can help prevent droplet infection, both from you to others and from others to you. If everyone wears face masks in the proper situations, we will be able to prevent the spread of infection and maintain control of the epidemic.

ON BEING ILL WITH COVID-19 AND ON BEING TESTED

1. How does the disease typically progress?

Symptoms develop between 1 and 14 days from the time of exposure, where the majority develop symptoms after 5-7 days.

Typical symptoms in the beginning, and in mild cases, resemble those of the flu and other upper respiratory tract infections with a fever, dry cough and fatigue. Other early, but less common symptoms, include, e.g. headache, muscle pain, a sore throat, nausea, loss of taste and smell, etc.

In many cases, you will not be able to distinguish mild symptoms of COVID-19 from those caused by the common cold or the flu, which are not caused by COVID-19 but by other viruses. The majority of people with mild symptoms get better within 3 to 7 days and do not need medical attention. Symptoms vary from individual to individual, and experiencing symptoms such as fever is not in itself indicative of whether you have contracted COVID-19 or not. A stuffy or runny nose, with no other symptoms, is not typical of COVID-19.

Gradually, and during the course of a few days – typically 4 to 7 days – some people develop symptoms of pneumonia. Their cough gets worse, their fever rises, and they are experiencing shortness of breath, which may become so severe that they require hospitalisation. However, the majority are released from the hospital after only a few days, but a few need further intensive care and perhaps also ventilator treatment.

Most children with COVID-19 get only mild or no symptoms and recover without treatment.

2. What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19 and should I be tested?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are in doubt whether it is COVID-19, you should act as if you were infected with novel coronavirus and:

1. self-isolate
2. pay particular attention to hygiene
3. pay particular attention to cleaning
4. call your own doctor for an assessment and possible referral for testing, even if your symptoms are only mild

You can learn more in Danish in our pamphlet Til dig, der har symptomer på COVID-19. Please wear a face mask if you have to break your self-isolation, e.g. when you go for testing, etc.

Learn more in Danish about how to use a face mask in our pamphlet Brug af mundbind or download the poster How to use a face mask.

If you have symptoms but are in doubt as to whether you are “really” sick, we recommend that you consider yourself sick. If you have mild symptoms and choose not to be tested, we recommend that you behave as if you have COVID-19 and follow the advice in the section below.

3. What should I do while I wait for the results of my test?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are in doubt whether it is COVID-19, you should act as if you were infected with novel coronavirus and:

1. self-isolate
2. pay particular attention to hygiene
3. pay particular attention to cleaning
4. call your own doctor for an assessment and possible referral for testing, even if your symptoms are only mild

You can learn more in Danish in our pamphlet Til dig, der har symptomer på COVID-19. Please wear a face mask if you have to break your self-isolation, e.g. when you go for testing, etc.

Learn more in Danish about how to use a face mask in our pamphlet Brug af mundbind or download the poster How to use a face mask.

If you have symptoms but are in doubt as to whether you are “really” sick, we recommend that you consider yourself sick. If you have mild symptoms and choose not to be tested, we recommend that you behave as if you have COVID-19 and follow the advice in the section below.
If you have been referred for testing because you have symptoms, or because you are a close contact, you should act as if you were infected until the test results are back.

While you are waiting for the result of your test, your family members can behave as usual and go to work, etc., provided they themselves do not have symptoms.

Learn more about how to act under "What should I do if I am tested positive for novel coronavirus?"

4 What should I do if I am tested positive for novel coronavirus? 

Regardless of whether you have been referred for testing because you have symptoms or whether you are asymptomatic but have been referred for testing as part of, e.g. contact tracking measures, you should do the following:
1. self-isolate
2. pay particular attention to hygiene
3. pay particular attention to cleaning
Continue your self-isolation until 48 hours after you are symptom-free (if you have experienced any symptoms). However, symptoms such as loss of taste and smell can linger for a long time even though you are no longer considered infectious. You can, therefore, end your self-isolation if these are your only remaining symptoms.

If you have no symptoms, you should still self-isolate until 7 days after you have taken the test.

Learn more in What to do if you test positive for novel coronavirus, The pamphlet contains information on what to do if you have become ill, when you should contact your doctor, and what you should do if you cannot self-isolate in your own home, etc.

Please wear a face mask if you have to break your self-isolation – e.g. if you have to go to the hospital. Learn more in Danish about how to use a face mask in our pamphlet Brug af mundbind or download the poster How to use a face mask.

5 Who needs to know that I am infected with novel coronavirus? 

If you have tested positive for novel coronavirus, it is important to inform anyone that you might have infected so they can be tested. This is known as contact tracking, and we use it to reduce the spread of infection in our society.

Anyone tested positive for novel coronavirus will be contacted by phone by an employee from Coronaopsporing (Corona Tracking) – which is a division of the Danish Patient Safety Authority – who can advise you on how to track close contacts and possibly even call them for you. If you do not receive a call, you can contact Coronaopsporing on tel. 32 32 05 11.

If there is an outbreak of novel coronavirus in schools, daycare, etc. please notify the management, so the parents of exposed children can be informed, and the children tested.
Learn more about who we define as close contacts, etc. in our pamphlet What to do if you test positive for novel coronavirus.

6 Can I take a test even though I have no symptoms or am not a close contact of someone who is infected with novel coronavirus? 

Anyone with symptoms – or who is a close contact of someone infected with novel coronavirus – must be referred for testing by their doctor or Coronaopsporing.

Anyone else, who wish to be tested, can schedule a test online at coronaaprover.dk. Follow the instructions (in Danish) on the website, and find information on how to book a test, the test itself, and test results. Please note that you may also be called in for testing as part of government monitoring.

You can read more in Danish about the Ministry of Health’s test strategy on the joint website for the Danish authorities.
ON CONTACT TRACKING AND CLOSE CONTACTS

1. How will I learn if I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for novel coronavirus?

If you are a close contact of someone who has been tested positive for novel coronavirus, you will typically be notified either by the person who is infected or via a call from an employee from Coronaopsporing (a division of the Danish Patient Safety Authority).

You may have been close to people you do not know or whose contact information you do not have - for example, someone you have been sitting next to on a bus or been standing close to at an event. This makes it difficult for you to inform them that you have tested positive for novel coronavirus. The app 'smitte|stop' is a digital tool that allows you to effortlessly and anonymously notify people you have been close to – but only if they also have the app.

You can read more about the app in English at smittestop.dk and download it from the App Store or Google Play Store.

Only a few people will be categorised as close contacts if you have followed the Danish Health Authority’s advice on physical distancing, cough etiquette and hygiene. Close contacts will typically be those you live with or otherwise are in close contact with on a day-to-day basis.

Learn more about who we define as close contacts, etc. in our pamphlet What to do if you test positive for novel coronavirus.

Learn more in Guidance for parents, if a case of novel coronavirus/COVID-19 is confirmed in childcare institutions, schools and other institutions for children and young people.

If you live or work in a nursing home, supported residential facility, shelter or another institution and have tested positive for novel coronavirus, we refer you to the Danish Health Authority’s guideline Vejledning om forebyggelse af smitte med COVID-19 på plejecentre, bosteder og andre institutioner (in Danish).

If you work at a school or daycare centre and have tested positive for COVID-19, we have prepared a guideline in Danish Information om forholdsregler ved tilfælde af COVID-19 i skoler, dagtilbud og andre tilbud til børn og unge.

2. What should I do if I am a close contact of someone infected with novel coronavirus?

If you are notified that you are the close contact of someone who has tested positive for novel coronavirus, you must immediately self-isolate and be tested. Until your test results come back, you should act as if you are infected. In the meantime, your family members can behave as usual and go to work, etc., provided they themselves are not close contacts or have symptoms.

Learn how to be tested and how to act in our pamphlet What to do if you are a close contact of a person who has tested positive for novel coronavirus.

Use a face mask if you must break your self-isolation – e.g. when you are going for your test. Learn more in Danish about how to use a face mask in our pamphlet Brug af mundbind or download the poster How to use a face mask.

3. Why should close contacts be tested even if they have no symptoms

Although people with symptoms are probably more contagious than people who have no symptoms, those who have no symptoms may still infect others. This applies both during the period before symptoms occur and if no symptoms develop at all. Most people infected with novel coronavirus typically develop symptoms within 1 and 14 days after they have been exposed to the infection. The risk of infecting others is particularly increased in the days leading up to developing symptoms – i.e. at a time when you yourself do not even know that you are infected.

Contact tracking aims at preventing you from spreading the disease if you are infected and have no symptoms. You do this by self-isolation and by being tested. In this way, the chains of infection are effectively broken.
PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK OF SEVERE ILLNESS FROM COVID-19

1. What is behind the Danish Health Authority’s assessment of who is at higher risk?

Certain diseases and conditions lead to a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and the patient may need hospitalisation and perhaps treatment in an intensive care unit.

Based on available knowledge about COVID-19, both from Denmark and abroad, and on assessments by medical specialty societies, the Danish Health Authority has updated its assessment of which diseases and conditions that may cause increased risk.

For some diseases and conditions, it is well documented that there is a significantly increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. For others, it is well documented that there is an increased risk of other types of infections, while there is not as much documentation specific to COVID-19. For these diseases and conditions, it is believed that they may also entail an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Finally, there are situations where there is no evidence of an increased risk of COVID-19, but where, based on a precautionary principle, it is assumed that there may be an increased risk. Thus, the precautionary principle applied to pregnant women out of consideration for the unborn child.

You can read more in Danish about the basis for the Danish Health Authority’s assessment in the publication Personer med øget risiko ved COVID-19 – Fagligt grundlag.

2. Who is at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19?

For the following groups, it is well-documented that there is a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- People over the age of 70, and especially those over 80 years
- People over the age of 65 with one or more chronic diseases
- Residents in nursing homes/assisted living facilities
People who are severely overweight with a BMI over 35 and people who are severely overweight with a BMI over 30 with one or more chronic diseases.

For the following groups, it is assumed that there is a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- People with certain chronic diseases
- Certain children with chronic diseases
- People without a permanent residence

You can see which diseases and conditions are thought to lead to a higher risk of severe illness in Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger for personer i øget risiko.

Some people are so familiar with their illness or condition that they can determine whether they are at higher risk based on the Danish Health Authority's professional assessment. Others may need to discuss whether they are at higher risk based on the general advice from their physician if they are at increased risk. In such cases, the doctor can provide a concrete and individual assessment of the individual and their overall situation as to whether the individual is at higher risk.

In addition, based on a precautionary principle, we consider pregnant women to be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

In general, it is important to bear in mind that it is always an individual assessment whether you are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and that your entire situation has to be taken into account. For example, someone at an extreme old age, who concomitantly suffers from multiple and severe chronic diseases, is at higher risk than someone with only mild effects from a chronic disease. There may also be social circumstances that put you at a higher overall risk, such as poor housing etc.

Please talk to your own doctor or the physician in charge of your treatment if you are anxious and would like to have your overall risk assessed based on your individual circumstances.

You can learn more about which diseases and conditions are thought to pose an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 in English on our website and in Danish in the pamphlet Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

### What should I do if I am at higher risk of severe illness?

Novel coronavirus is a new virus, but COVID-19 is not fundamentally different from many other infectious diseases that cause respiratory infections. Therefore, if you are at a higher risk of severe illness, you should take the usual precautions against infections, and follow any advice from your physician. This means that whatever you could do before the COVID-19 epidemic – e.g. go to work or look after your grandchildren – you can still do in if you follow the precautionary advice in Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko (in Danish).

If, before the COVID-19 epidemic, you took special precautions on the advice of your physician, e.g. in certain circumstances when your immune system was reduced or in diseases such as cystic fibrosis, please continue to follow your physician’s advice.

As a rule, persons at higher risk of severe illness with COVID-19 can participate in social events at e.g. work if everyone adheres to the general advice from the Danish Health Authority.

Learn more in Danish about which precautions we recommend you take in our pamphlet Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

In situations where face-to-face contact within two metres is unavoidable, people at higher risk of severe illness may consider using a precautionary physical barrier against droplet spread, e.g. face mask or face visor. You can read more in the section On face masks.

### I am a person at higher risk – can I go to work?

The Danish Health Authority assesses that people at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 do not, as a rule, need to...
be relocated or work from home, even if they come into contact with a lot of people on a daily basis. The vast majority of people at higher risk can participate in social events and go to work if they adhere to the special precautions, including increased hygiene and distance, as described above.

The employer is responsible for ensuring that the working environment is safe, including that employees are informed about possible sources of infection, e.g. contact points, and that it is possible at the workplace to take significant measures to reduce the risk of disease. In work situations where the Danish Health Authority recommends the use of protective equipment, the employer must make these available.

Individuals at higher risk, possibly determined by their own doctor or by a treating physician in hospital following a specific, individual assessment, may need special measures at their workplace.

People at higher risk employed in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors should not perform tasks or functions where they participate in the care or treatment of and have close contact with citizens or patients - either suspected of being infected with COVID-19 based on typical and characteristic symptoms or with confirmed cases of COVID-19. In such cases, the employee at higher risk should be reassigned to another task or function. Any hindrances to relocating the employee to another job or function must be solved locally and must not constitute an obstacle to the reassignment of the employee.

Based on an extended precautionary principle focusing on the unborn child, pregnant employees who work in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors, or with children aged 0-6 years, and who come into close contact with patients, citizens or children while treating or caring for them must from week 28 onwards be reassigned to work away from the public. If it is not possible to reassign the employee to work away from the public – e.g. with telephone consultations, etc. – and working from home is not a viable option, then the pregnant employee must be granted a leave of absence.

Learn more in Danish in our pamphlet Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

I am at higher risk – how anxious should I be and to what extent should I limit my activities?  

As a relative/loved one of someone at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, it is perfectly natural to be worried. But keep in mind that the risk of infecting others is quite small if you are asymptomatic and that the virus primarily spreads through contact spread – e.g. by touching contact points such as door handles, etc.

In general, we recommend that you take extra care in complying with our general advice on limiting the spread of infection. Learn more in Danish in our pamphlet Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

One of my relatives/loved ones is at higher risk - how should I conduct myself?  

As a relative/loved one of someone at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, it is perfectly natural to be worried.

But keep in mind that the risk of infecting others is quite small if you are asymptomatic and that the virus primarily spreads through contact spread – e.g. by touching contact points such as door handles, etc. In general, we recommend that you take extra care in complying with our general advice on limiting the spread of infection and that you:

- maintain proper hand hygiene and e.g. wash your hands thoroughly when you come home (from work, shopping, etc.)
- make sure your relative/loved one is also particularly vigilant with maintaining proper hand hygiene
- pay particular attention to hygiene and cleaning in the home
- if your work involves close physical contact with other people, and you are at risk of having secretions from sneezing or coughing on your clothing, we recommend that you change your clothes and wash them as soon as you get home – even before you greet your relative/loved one
- children can also spread the infection and we recommend that you assist your children in following the general advice on hygiene to limit the spread of infection

Keep a close eye out for symptoms that could be indicative of COVID-19

If you develop symptoms of upper respiratory infection, you should isolate yourself from your relatives/loved ones and call your GP for assessment and referral for a COVID-19 test. The same also applies to only mild symptoms. Bear in mind that the risk of infecting others is quite small if you are asymptomatic and that the virus primarily spreads through touching e.g. contact points such as door handles, etc.
If you live with someone who is at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, you can interact socially with other people, e.g. go to work or attend school/daycare/childcare. The same applies if you work in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors or in other sectors where you might come into close physical contact with other people.

The Danish Health Authority is of the opinion that employees in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors who live with someone at higher risk of severe illness – e.g. a partner or a child – should not perform tasks or functions in which they participate in the care or treatment of – and have close contact with – a citizen or patient suspected of being infected with COVID-19, based on typical and characteristic symptoms, or with confirmed COVID-19-cases. If the work situation in this context cannot be assured in a satisfactory way, for example by avoiding close contact, nursing, care or treatment tasks, the employee must be reassigned to another job or function.

You can read more in Danish in Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

7 Particularly about pregnant women and newborns

Currently, there is nothing to suggest that pregnant women and newborn babies are particularly at risk from novel coronavirus. However, it has been documented that some women admitted to hospital with COVID-19 in the third trimester are delivered prematurely by caesarean section. Their babies are therefore born before term with the usual risks associated with premature birth. The Danish Health Authority is monitoring the situation closely with the relevant experts. Based on a principle of caution, pregnant women are considered a risk group, which is why we recommend that they take the same precautions as described in the section People at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Based on an extended precautionary principle focusing on the unborn child, pregnant employees who work in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors, or with children aged 0-6 years, and who come into close contact with patients, citizens or children must from week 28 onwards be reassigned to work away from the public. If it is not possible to reassign the employee to work away from the public – e.g. with telephone consultations – and working from home is not a viable option, then the pregnant employee must be granted a leave of absence.

Learn more in Danish in Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

Your pregnancy and the birth of your child will proceed as usual under the guidelines of the hospital and midwife – and any local measures put in place, such as video consultations, etc. However, you should inform your midwife, doctor and/or hospital if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 and if you test positive for new coronavirus. There are no restrictions on visits to mother and child as long as no one has symptoms of COVID-19.

Pregnant women, who have tested positive for novel coronavirus, are encouraged to give birth in a hospital. Mothers who are infected with novel coronavirus can breastfeed and remain in close contact with the newborn child. However, before breastfeeding, infected mothers should wash their hands and breast thoroughly (with soap and water) and wear a face mask while breastfeeding their children.

Please contact your midwife, doctor or the hospital if you have any questions.
Please call the Danish Patient Safety Authority’s hotline if you have any questions on dealing with infected or suspected infected persons, on what to do if staff or citizens show symptoms of having contracted COVID-19, or if you are a GP and need information on how to assist positive COVID-19-cases with close contact tracking, etc. Please note that the hotline is only for professional personnel in the healthcare, eldercare and social services.

If you have any questions relating to how the health authorities’ recommendations for novel coronavirus are executed in the social sector, please go to the National Board of Social Services’ website or call their hotline.

2 I have symptoms that could be COVID-19 - how should I conduct myself?

As an employee in the healthcare, eldercare and social sectors, you have to be particularly vigilant, pay special attention to symptoms, and go home if you develop symptoms that might suggest COVID-19. Employers also have a special obligation to send any employer home who shows signs of having contracted COVID-19.

You can return to work when you have been symptom-free for 48 hours.

Employees in the healthcare, eldercare or in the social sector who work with particularly vulnerable social groups, and who have mild respiratory symptoms compatible with COVID-19, can go directly for testing in a regional COVID-19 clinic if they have cleared it with their immediate manager or his/her supervisor. If the test is negative, the employee can return to work. If the test is positive, the employee should follow the guidelines for those who are ill – including self-isolation at home until 48 hours after the person is symptom-free. Learn more in Danish in the guidelines of the Danish Health Authority’s publication Håndtering af COVID-19 i sundhedsvæsenet.

Learn more on the testing of staff at the regions’ websites:

- Capital Region of Denmark
- Central Denmark Region
- North Denmark Region
- Region Zealand
- Region of Southern Denmark

We do not recommend that you use the results of a test taken after the symptoms have ceased as the basis for notification of fitness to resume work, as a test show a positive result for a long time after the symptoms have ceased, without the person being contagious.

3 I am a person at higher risk of severe illness – what should I do?

The Danish Health Authority does not deem it necessary for people at higher risk to be automatically reassigned to other functions or allowed to work from home, even though they come into contact with many people during the workday. You can learn more in the section People at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

People at higher risk employed in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors should not perform tasks or functions where they participate in the care or treatment of and have close contact with citizens or patients - either suspected of being infected with COVID-19 based on typical and characteristic symptoms or with confirmed cases of COVID-19. In such cases, the employee at higher risk should be reassigned to another task or function. Any hindrances to relocating the employee to another job or function must be solved locally and must not constitute an obstacle to the reassignment of the employee.

Based on an extended precautionary principle focusing on the unborn child, pregnant employees who work in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors, or with children aged 0-6 years, and who come into close contact with patients, citizens or children while treating or caring for them must from week 28 onwards be reassigned to work away from the public. If it is not possible to reassign the employee to work away from the public – e.g. with telephone consultations, etc. – and working from home is not a viable option, then the pregnant employee must be granted a leave of absence.

Learn more in Danish in Håndtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.
FOR PERSONNEL IN OTHER SECTORS

1 On the Danish Health Authority's recommendations to other sectors

As part of the gradual and controlled reopening of the Danish society, we reopen daycare, schools, liberal professions, retail, restaurants, cafés, etc. at various stages.

» Read more about the reopening and the different phases

A gradual reopening of society requires an increased awareness of - and demands for - local infection prevention measures.

The Danish Health Authority cannot provide comprehensive and detailed instructions for all sections, sectors and professions, but by using several examples, we have tried to make the general recommendations actionable. Recommendations should be adapted to your particular situation and risk assessment, including special circumstances where the precautionary principle should be followed.

You can read more in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

For up-to-date guidelines on education and daycare, liberal services, other industries, etc., please see the websites of the relevant public sector authorities.

2 I am an employer – are there any special precautions I should take concerning my employees?

We recommend that you comply with the Danish Health Authority's five general pieces of advice to prevent the spread of infection – e.g. hand hygiene, cleaning, and social distancing – and incorporate them into everything you do, including in the workplace. Learn more in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

If you have symptoms of illness, stay home and follow the advice in the section On being ill with COVID-19 and on being tested.

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that the working environment is safe. Among other things, the employer must provide easy access to hand hygiene, design the workplace to limit the risk of infection, e.g. by ensuring that employees can maintain proper distancing during meetings, and consider putting up physical barriers in situations where close contact cannot be avoided, for example when serving customers.

You can learn more in On the Danish Health Authority's recommendations to other sectors above and in Danish in COVID-19: Forebyggelse af smittespredning.

Individuals at higher risk, possibly determined by their GP or by a treating physician in hospital following a specific, individual assessment, may need special measures at their workplace. Learn more in Danish in Handtering af COVID-19: Anbefalinger til personer i øget risiko.

Furthermore, you can read The Danish Health Authority's collected material to personnel in other sectors in Danish.

OTHER QUESTIONS

1 Travels and tourists

For information on what you should do if you travel to or from Denmark, please go to the Danish Foreign Ministry’s website and the page If you are travelling to or from Denmark before you decide to travel.

» Questions and answers on travelling to and from Denmark

Information for tourists in Denmark (in 9 languages)

Wear a face mask if you are on your way home from, e.g. the airport and going into self-isolation after a trip to a country or region to which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark advises against unnecessary travel due to COVID-19. See how to use a face mask properly in the pamphlet *Brug Mundbind* (in Danish) or download the poster *How to use a face mask.*

Advice about mental health

It can be a challenge for many people, that much of the framework in our society is changed during the COVID-19 epidemic. This can affect our quality of life and how well we thrive.

The Danish Health Authority has written a collection of good advice about what you can do to maintain and strengthen your mental health and well-being:

- maintain your usual daily rhythm and get enough sleep
  The less sleep you get, the more likely you will be to worry and be anxious

- eat a healthy, varied diet
  This will ensure that you have the energy for daily challenges

- keep physically active
  Physical activity can be many things, including gardening or gymnastics in your living room. Make it a priority to get outside, be active and get fresh air every day. Daylight also lifts your spirit

- keep mentally active
  keep your brain active by doing different kinds of activities. Read, play a game, write in a journal, listen to music or do something creative

- create structure to your day
  Make a plan or schedule with activities for the day or week, and establish routines. If you are working at home, try to work during the same time period you usually do

- remember that you are making a difference
  Hold on to the thought that by maintaining social distancing, you are actively contributing to the effort to look out for vulnerable citizens and ensuring that Denmark can more quickly get the epidemic under control. Be aware of how you can support and help others in your daily life.

- keep in touch with the outside world – do something together at a distance
  Call your family and friends, talk over video and use social media

- accept that this crisis can be a burden for your loved ones
  This unexpected situation can put pressure on your relationships with those you are together with more than usual. Be understanding with yourself and others, if you sometimes lose patience

- relax and take a break from your worries
  Limit the amount of news you watch or read. Chose reliable sources for news

- don’t blame yourself or others for being infected with COVID-19
  Remember that the disease is caused by a virus, not by people

- take care of yourself

Try to avoid habits like irregular sleep, too much alcohol or smoking. Make it a priority to do good things for yourself. When you take care of yourself, you are better able to take care of others.

Read more about mental health in the Danish Health Authority's pamphlet (In Danish)
If you need to talk to somebody, you can contact Psykiatrifonden. Contacts and inquiries made to Psykiatrifonden come both from people who experience general worries and anxiety about infection and spreading infection, and from people who experience that isolation and a limited social life affect their mental health. Some contacts come from people who have a mental illness or other forms of vulnerability, and experience that treatment, home visits, etc. have been changed, where the consequence is a worsening of their symptoms. See also below in “Advice for those who are psychologically vulnerable or is a relative/loved one of someone who is psychologically vulnerable”.

It is only natural that the COVID-19 epidemic gives rise to concern that either you or someone else can become infected and possibly seriously ill. But for some, worrying can take hold and turn into such overwhelming anxiety that it affects their wellbeing. This condition is known as health anxiety. Follow the link to learn more about health anxiety (in Danish).

**Particularly regarding children**

Children can have many questions about novel coronavirus, especially with the wide media coverage and the sudden changes to everyday life.

If children don’t have things put into perspective and talk about any fears they may have, they can end up carrying many worries with them.

The Danish Health Authority and Børns Vilkår have produced two videos for parents and children that can help children find answers to their questions as well as help prepare parents to talk to their children about it. The first film is aimed at school children ages 6-15 and answers questions about novel coronavirus. The second film is aimed at adults and gives good advice about how to talk to children about novel coronavirus, including:

- listening to the children’s concerns
- talking to the children about what the facts are
- talking to the children about what they see on the news
- asking the children if they feel they got their questions answered

→ Watch the films for children and parents (both are in Danish)

The organization Børn, Unge og Sorg has also founded a hotline for children, youths and parents, who may need to talk to a psychologist. It can be a good idea to talk with a psychologist if a child or youth is vulnerable, for instance has anxiety or has a family with difficulties, perhaps because of serious illness, and therefore particularly worried about the current situation. You can read more on their website (The site is in Danish).

**Advice for those who are psychologically vulnerable or is a relative/loved one of someone who is psychologically vulnerable**

The containment measures taken by Denmark to reduce the spread of COVID-19 have a profound impact on our daily life. But for those who are psychologically vulnerable, and are already struggling with feelings such as trauma, sadness and worries, this is a particularly difficult time and some may experience a worsening of their symptoms.

The precautionary measures to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus may mean that relatives/loved ones are prevented from coming to see you. And the help and support you are used to getting have perhaps been put on hold or changed to contact over the phone or internet. It can be a difficult situation if you are mentally vulnerable or the relative/loved one of someone who is psychologically vulnerable.

We recommend that you do not hold back from contacting the psychiatric emergency services if you are in need of psychiatric help.

And bear in mind that you can always call your doctor for help and advice. Your doctor knows you and can determine if your condition requires further assessment.

If you are psychologically vulnerable, a relative/loved one of someone who is psychologically vulnerable, or if you are a professional working in this field, you can get further information and advice by reading this publication in Danish.

This pamphlet contains advice in Danish for families with children and adolescents who are exhibiting psychological vulnerability during the COVID-19 epidemic.

If you are in crisis, have thoughts of suicide and need urgent, psychiatric help, please call the psychiatric emergency department in your region. Contact information can be found by clicking on the map on this website.

If you need to talk to someone about your suicidal thoughts, you can contact Livslinens (the Lifeline’s) counsellors by:
- calling the helpline on tel. 70 201 201, open daily from 11 a.m. – 4 a.m.
- sending an email via skrivdet.dk You can expect a reply within 1-3 days
- chatting to a counsellor, the chat is open Mondays and Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Furthermore, the regional suicide prevention centres offer individual psychological counselling if you have not previously been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder or is not currently undergoing treatment for a mental disorder. Your own doctor can refer you, but some regions will allow you to contact them without a referral from your doctor. Follow the link to find your regional suicide prevention centres and clinics (In Danish).

What about sex. Should I take special precautions during the COVID-19 epidemic?

Having sex is a basic human need that can be good for your mental health in difficult times.

You can enjoy sex during the COVID-19 epidemic as long as you remember to look after yourself and others. Novel coronavirus infects via droplets and secretions from the respiratory tract, which are transmitted by close contact, such as kisses. There are no indications that novel coronavirus is transmitted via semen or blood, but the virus has been detected in faeces.

You can protect yourself and others by following these tips:
- have sex with your regular partner, or with as few partners as possible
- only have sex if both parties are healthy
- maintain proper hygiene and remember to wash your hands (and any sex toys) with soap and water, before and after sex and masturbation
- avoid kissing and hugging someone outside your immediate circle
- adhere to our general advice.

How can I tell whether my symptoms are due to pollen allergies/hay fever or COVID-19?

Both COVID-19 and pollen allergy can cause mild cold symptoms, and if you have hay fever, it may be difficult to assess whether the symptoms are caused by allergies or the onset of mild COVID-19 symptoms.

We recommend that you stay at home if you experience mild symptoms such as a stuffy nose, coughing or a sore throat. Be vigilant with your hay fever treatment and take your medication as prescribed. If your symptoms do not worsen, the medication helps, and your symptoms are consistent with your usual symptoms, then your symptoms are most likely due to allergies and you do not need to stay home. If new symptoms occur that you do not normally experience with your allergy, or if you have a fever, you should stay home until 48 hours after you have recovered. You can also contact your general practitioner if you want to be tested for COVID-19.

However, bear in mind that you may be affected by hay fever and COVID-19 at the same time. Stay home if you are in doubt, and consult your doctor if you are anxious.

On children and playdates

On 20 March, the Danish Health Authority issued guidelines for how children should play. Based on the precautionary principle, these guidelines were rather far-reaching. Such rigorous guidelines are no longer required, as we have gained...
more control over the COVID-19 epidemic. But even though we seem to be on top of the outbreak, it is still essential that everyone continued to adhere to our general advice on how to prevent the spread of infection.

When children play together, it will be somewhat impossible to comply with the distance recommendation of 1 metre. Instead, you should focus on the things you can control, such as:

- not allowing children with symptoms of illness to play with other children
- making sure the children wash their hands or use hand sanitisers frequently
- seeing to it that the children play outside and with as few new children as possible.

In addition, you must be aware of the authorities’ requirements on the size of assemblies, and generally avoid places where people are standing close to each other.

7 **Helpful advice on private parties and events**

The Danish Health Authority has published information material with advice and examples of how to incorporate preventive measures when you plan private celebrations and events. See the [advice in Danish](https://politi.dk/en/coronavirus-in-denmark/frequently-asked-questions).

8 **Helpful advice for larger public assemblies – e.g. if you are going to attend a demonstration**

The Danish Health Authority has published information material with advice for those who organise events involving large public assemblies, e.g. demonstrations. See the advice in Danish [here](https://politi.dk/en/coronavirus-in-denmark/frequently-asked-questions).

9 **Can novel coronavirus be transmitted through bath water and swimming pools?**

Please see the Danish Environmental Protection Agency’s website for precautionary measures related to COVID-19 in connection with drinking water supply, wastewater treatment, bath water and swimming pools.

10 **Can novel coronavirus be transmitted through contact with animals?**

Please see the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark’s website on information in Danish about COVID-19 and animals.