

Guidance from the Danish Health Authority

# What to do if you test positive for novel coronavirus

In this pamphlet, you can find answers to some of the questions you may have if you test positive for novel coronavirus.

You can read about how to self-isolate, who you should inform that you are infected etc.

11 January 2021



# Important information about novel coronavirus/COVID-19

## COVID-19 is the name of the disease caused by infection with novel coronavirus.

### Infection

To prevent the spread of infection, it is important to know how novel coronavirus is transmitted.



**Contact spread:** If someone who is infected with novel coronavirus has virus-infected saliva or snot on their hands, they can pass on the infection directly to others, for example by shaking hands with them. An infected person can also deposit the virus on surfaces such as door handles when coughing/sneezing or when touching the surfaces with contaminated hands. The next person who comes along and touches the same surface can then become infected when touching his or her own nose, eyes or mouth.

**Droplet spread:** An infected person can spread droplets containing the virus through coughing or sneezing. These droplets can be inhaled by another person or land in their eyes, nose or mouth.

### Symptoms

Typical symptoms of COVID-19:

Dry cough	Sore throat
Fever	Loss of sense of taste and smell
Difficulty breathing	Muscle pain



### General guidance on how to prevent infection

1. Self-isolate if you have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive or are a close contact of someone who is infected with novel coronavirus.
2. Wash your hands often or use hand sanitiser.
3. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
4. Do not shake hands, hug or kiss as a greeting.
5. Make sure to clean thoroughly – both at home and at work.
6. Keep your distance and ask others to be considerate.



If you are unable to comply with one of the recommendations, make sure that you comply with the others.

# 1. What to do if you test positive for novel coronavirus?

If virus was identified in the test sample, your test results are positive and the Danish text at sundhed.dk will read either:

- Positiv (positive)
- Formodet positiv (presumed positive)
- Påvist (detected)

Regardless of whether you have symptoms or not, if you test positive, you must:

1. Self-isolate
2. Pay extra attention to hygiene and cleaning
3. Make sure to trace your close contacts – the people you may have infected

## How do I self-isolate?

The most important way of preventing the spread of infection is by self-isolating – both those who have already tested positive and those who may have become infected because they are close contacts.

This means:

- That you should stay at home and not meet with people you do not live with. Stay at home, and do not go out. Do not go to work and get others to help with shopping, walking your dog etc. If you order food or other items for home delivery, make sure that deliveries are left outside your front door. Do not allow visitors to enter your home. Keep in touch by phone or video calls instead.

In many communities, local initiatives have been launched to help those who need support. Check to see if such support is available in your local area. You can also contact 'Røde Kors Parat' on tel. 35 29 96 60 or visit [rodekors.dk/parat](https://rodekors.dk/parat).

- Avoid close contact with other members of your household. This is particularly important if you live with someone who is at risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Avoid close physical contact such as kissing and hugging and keep a distance of at least 2 metres from other people. Avoid sleeping together and spending too much time together in the same room. Ideally you should use a separate toilet/bathroom. If this is not possible, you should clean surfaces, such as handles and taps, before the toilet/bathroom is used by other members of your household.

Make sure to wear a CE-marked face mask if you need to leave your home for a short period of time, for example if you have to go to the hospital. You can [read more about how to use a face mask at our website](#).

### What does it mean that you need to pay extra attention to hygiene and cleaning?

Paying extra attention to hygiene and cleaning means:

- Washing your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, or using hand sanitiser if you do not have access to soap and water. Using hand sanitiser is as effective as washing your hands. However, we recommend that you wash your hands if they are visibly dirty or wet, after using the toilet, after changing nappies and before handling food.
- Good hand hygiene is especially important after using the toilet, after blowing your nose and before you start cooking. It is important to care for your hands, for example by using an unscented rich hand cream to prevent dry hands and eczema.
- Avoid touching your face. Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue/kitchen roll paper or into your sleeve. Place used disposable tissues in a bag and tie securely.
- Do not share towels with other people.
- Clean the room(s) you spend time in daily. It is particularly important that you clean objects, surfaces and contact points that are touched by many members of the household, such as handles, handrails, switches, keyboards, computer mice, armrests, the edges of tables, toys, taps, toilets etc.
- Remember to frequently air out the room(s) you spend time in.

### When are you no longer contagious and can stop self-isolating?

If you have had symptoms, you are no longer considered contagious and can stop self-isolating when you have been symptom-free for 48 hours. Please note that any loss of sense of taste and smell may persist for longer. This does not mean that you are still infectious. You may therefore stop self-isolating if these are your only remaining symptoms.

If you have not had any symptoms, you are no longer contagious and can stop self-isolating 7 days after you had your test done.

You do not need to be tested again to be regarded as having recovered. The test can be positive due to inactive virus, even if you are healthy and no longer able to infect anyone else. As long as you have been symptom-free for 48 hours, you can stop self-isolating and consider yourself free from infection. So you do not have to have a negative test to be able to return to work, school etc.



## Especially about children

Most children only develop mild symptoms of COVID-19, and children should generally follow the same guidance as adults. Therefore, children with symptoms of COVID-19 should also be kept at home and be tested, and follow the same precautions as adults who test positive.

Please remember that children need loving care and physical contact like hugs and comforting, and that this is far more important than keeping your distance. This applies regardless of whether it is you or your child who has tested positive.

When a child tests positive, the school or childcare institution management is notified, so they can take the necessary precautions and inform the parents of the other children who may have been exposed to infection.

The parent looking after an infected child should be tested immediately and self-isolate from the rest of the family together with the child. Even if this test is negative, the parent should stay at home and self-isolate with the infected child until the child is free from infection (that is until the child has been free from symptoms for 48 hours – or 7 days after the test was taken if the child does not have any symptoms). The parent should then be tested again as soon as possible after the child has been free from symptoms for 48 hours.

[More information and guidance at our website.](#)

## 2. Tracing close contacts

When you have tested positive for novel coronavirus, it is important to inform everyone you have been in close contact with as they are at high risk of having been infected. These people are called your 'close contacts', and tracing them is called 'contact tracing'. Contact tracing is an important tool in preventing the spread of infection by making your close contacts self-isolate as soon as possible and get tested.

You do not have to identify who your close contacts are before you receive a positive test result. While you wait for your test result, or if your test result is negative, you should not identify your close contacts and inform them that they may be infected.

### Who are your close contacts?

- **If you have tested positive and have symptoms**, your close contacts are everyone you have been in close contact with in the period from 48 hours before your symptoms started and until 48 hours after you were free from symptoms.
- **If you have tested positive and do not have any symptoms**, your close contacts are everyone you have been in close contact with in the period from 48 hours before you had your test done and for the next 7 days.

People you were last in close contact with more than 14 days ago are not regarded as close contacts.

The following people are considered your close contacts if they have been in close contact with you during the above-mentioned periods:

- People you live with
- People you have direct physical contact with (hugged or the like) or people who have had unprotected and direct contact with infectious secretions from you (for example if you have accidentally coughed or sneezed on them, or because they have touched your used tissue, face mask etc.)
- People you have had close contact with at a distance of less than 1 metre for more than 15 minutes.
- People you have spent more than 15 minutes with and at a distance of 2 metres or less – in one of the following situations:
  - Activities with heavy exhalation, for example singing, loud conversation or shouting
  - Physical activities such as fitness training or yoga
  - Been together in an enclosed space with poor ventilation.

Typical close contacts are other members of your household, someone you share a bedroom or sofa with, or hug etc. on a daily basis. Close contacts also include the infected person's closest friends and/or family members that he or she has had close physical contact with (hugged or the like) or been sitting close to at dinner with less than 1 metre between you.

This may also apply to, for example, colleagues who have been standing close together for more than 15 minutes without the recommended distance of 1 metre – or 2 metres in an enclosed space without aeration or with poor ventilation. This may also apply to situations where you have been to the gym, worked out or been singing with someone and you have been less than 2 metres apart.

Close contacts of infected children include other children or adults in childcare institutions/daycare centres, in schools or in connection with leisure activities if they have had direct physical contact or played in close proximity to each other for more than 15 minutes.

It is not until you have tested positive that the people you have been in close contact with in the above-mentioned periods and situations become your close contacts.

### [You can get help to identify and contact your close contacts](#)

If you receive a positive test result at sundhed.dk, you will receive a letter in your e-Boks from the Danish Patient Safety Authority. An employee from Coronaopsporing will also call you, and you are also welcome to contact Coronaopsporing yourself on **tel. 32 32 05 11**.

Coronaopsporing can help you trace your close contacts and also offers to call your close contacts and guide them on how to self-isolate and get tested. You decide whether they may reveal your name to your close contacts. You can also choose to contact your close contacts yourself. If you decide to contact them yourself, it is important that you give them the correct information and guidance.

### [What should I tell my close contacts?](#)

Coronaopsporing will ask your close contacts to self-isolate and get tested. Close contacts are usually tested twice.

If you choose to inform your close contacts yourself, you can ask them to read our material [What to do if you are a close contact of a person who has tested positive for novel coronavirus](#), which provides guidance on how to get tested as a close contact, what to do while waiting for the test results etc. Close contacts can also call Coronaopsporing on **tel. 32 32 05 11**.

### [Contact tracing via the Danish 'smittelstop' app](#)

If you have downloaded the '[smittelstop](#)' app, you are encouraged to share your positive test result anonymously in the app. This way, you can notify people you have been in close contact with, but whom you do not know and whose contact information you do not have. You may, for example, have been sitting or standing close to someone on a bus, or at an event. These people are considered 'other contacts', and we recommend that they are tested as soon as possible. They do not have to self-isolate if they do not have any symptoms, but they must pay extra attention to symptoms, distancing and maintaining good hand hygiene.

## 2. About being ill with COVID-19

Most people who become infected with COVID-19 develop symptoms within 1 to 14 days after having been exposed to the virus. Most people get symptoms after 5-6 days.

Typical symptoms resemble those of the flu or the common cold, such as fever, dry cough and fatigue. Other early, but less frequent symptoms, include, muscle pain, sore throat, nausea, loss of sense of taste and smell etc.

Symptoms may vary from person to person, and the symptoms – such as whether you have a fever or not – cannot be used to rule out COVID-19.

Most people experience only mild symptoms and do not need medical assistance. Some people develop more severe illness, usually after 4 to 7 days during which their symptoms – cough, fever and difficulty breathing – worsen, and some people also develop pneumonia which may require hospitalisation.

### What can I do to relieve the symptoms?

You can do several things to relieve your own or your children's symptoms:

- Drink plenty of fluids, especially if you have a high fever.
- Muscle pain, headaches and fever may be relieved with paracetamol.
- A sore throat may be soothed with lozenges.

Contact your doctor if you are concerned about your symptoms or if your symptoms get worse.

### Will I become immune?

Current knowledge suggests that most people develop some level of immunity, but to what extent and for how long protection lasts remains uncertain. We do not yet have a reliable test to determine immunity.

Once you have recovered from COVID-19, you must therefore continue to comply with the general guidance on hand hygiene and distancing; self-isolate and get tested for symptoms that might make you suspect COVID-19; participate in contact tracing, etc. However, if you have had a positive test within the last 8 weeks, you should only get tested and self-isolate if you are told that you are a close contact and at the same time have symptoms of COVID-19.



### How do I manage to self-isolate and how do I handle any concerns I might have?

Being isolated from other people can be hard. The following advice may help you to cope:

- Do all you can to keep in touch with friends and family. Use social media, the phone and video calls.
- Try to occupy your mind by engaging in a hobby, reading, doing puzzles or other activities that require concentration and which make you happy.
- Stay as active as you possibly can, if you are not feeling too unwell. Make sure to keep physically active, get up from your chair and move about or do some floor exercises.
- Maintain your usual daily rhythm and get enough sleep.
- Always remember that you are making a difference in the world and that by staying at home you are protecting not only yourself but other people as well. In this way, you help prevent the spread of infection and protect those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

It is natural to feel concerned when you are told that you are infected with novel coronavirus. The following advice may help you to cope:

- Talk to your doctor if you are feeling anxious. If you are being treated for a particular disease and you are in doubt whether it may be affected by COVID-19, then contact the doctor or the hospital department in charge of your treatment.
- Remember that most people only develop mild symptoms of COVID-19 and will recover after a while.
- And also remember that in Denmark we have highly competent doctors and nurses who are ready to help you.
- Tell yourself that you are doing a great job if you follow the guidance issued by the authorities.
- Do not blame yourself or others for being infected with novel coronavirus. Remember that the disease is caused by a virus, not by individuals, and that novel coronavirus is highly contagious.
- If you find that you cannot stop worrying, and if your worrying is beginning to affect your life, please [visit our website to learn more about psychological crises and emergencies](#).

## 4. Further information

If you need medical advice about the course of your illness etc., please call your own doctor.

If you have tested positive for novel coronavirus, you will be contacted by Coronaopsporing who will help you trace your close contacts. You are also welcome to contact Coronaopsporing yourself on **tel. 32 32 05 11**.

If you are a close contact, you yourself can contact Coronaopsporing. See also [What to do if you are a close contact of a person who has tested positive for novel coronavirus](#).

### **The Danish Health Authority's information material:**

[Please go to our website to see a list of all current publications in English](#) – such as pamphlets, posters and films.