

ROUTES OF TRANSMISSION

The transmission of COVID-19 is thought to occur mainly through respiratory droplets generated by coughing and sneezing, and through contact with contaminated surfaces. The predominant modes of transmission are assumed to be droplet and contact.

Initial research has identified the presence of COVID-19 virus in the stools and conjunctival secretions of confirmed cases. All secretions (except sweat) and excretions, including diarrhoeal stools from patients with known or possible COVID-19, should be regarded as potentially infectious.

INCUBATION AND INFECTIOUS PERIOD

- The incubation period is from 1 to 14 days (median 5 days). Assessment of the clinical and epidemiological characteristics of COVID-19 cases suggests that, similar to SARS, most patients will not be infectious until the onset of symptoms. In most cases, individuals are usually considered infectious while they have symptoms; how infectious individuals are, depends on the severity of their symptoms and stage of their illness.
- The median time from symptom onset to clinical recovery for mild cases is approximately 2 weeks and is 3 to 6 weeks for severe or critical cases. There have been case reports that suggest possible infectivity prior to the onset of symptoms, with detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in some individuals before the onset of symptoms.
- Further study is required to determine the frequency, importance and impact of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic infection, in terms of transmission risks. From international data, the balance of evidence is that most people will have sufficiently reduced infectivity 7 days after the onset of symptoms.

SURVIVAL IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- In light of limited data for SARS-CoV-2, evidence was assessed from studies conducted with previous human coronaviruses including MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. Human coronaviruses can survive on inanimate objects and can remain viable for up to 5 days at temperatures of 22 to 25°C and relative humidity of 40 to 50% (which is typical of airconditioned indoor environments).
- Survival on environmental surfaces is also dependent on the surface type. An experimental study using a SARS-CoV-2 strain reported viability on plastic for up to 72 hours, for 48 hours on stainless steel and up to 8 hours on copper. Viability was quantified by end-point titration on Vero E6 cells. Extensive environmental contamination may occur following an AGP.
- The rate of clearance of aerosols in an enclosed space is dependent on the extent of any mechanical or natural ventilation and the size of the droplets created – the greater the number of air changes per hour (ventilation rate), the sooner any aerosol will be cleared.

TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS

- Contact precautions used to prevent and control infection transmission via direct contact or indirectly from the immediate care environment (including care equipment). This is the most common route of infection transmission
- Droplet precautions; social distancing and PPE used to reduce this risk
- Airborne precautions; wearing of face masks

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

- Hand hygiene
- Respiratory and cough hygiene – 'Catch it, bin it, kill it'
- Centre users/Members use of face masks
- Regular sanitising of common areas

THE MAIN SYMPTOMS* OF COVID-19 ARE;

- **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **A high temperature** – you feel hot to touch on your chest and/or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **A loss or change to your sense of taste or smell** - this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with COVID-19 have at least one of these symptoms.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS*

If you have ANY of the main symptoms of COVID-19 you must;

- **Stay at home (self-isolate)** - do not leave your home or have visitors. Anyone you live with and anyone in your support bubble must also self-isolate
- **Get a test** - Get a test to check if you have COVID-19 as soon as possible . Anyone you live with and anyone in your support bubble should also get a test

To get a test visit <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>