

How to Protect Yourself Against Covid-19

Bożena Szymańska

The information presented in this article is a result of collating data and recommendations from different sources submitted at the end of the article. The article describes how the virus manifests itself, how it is transferred from one person to another, and how it can be neutralized in everyday life.

Covid-19. What is it?

'Co' stands for corona, 'vi' stands for virus, 'd' stands for disease, '19' stands for 2019, the year when it first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan in November 2019.

In short: **Corona Virus Disease 2019**

The disease is caused by a member of the coronavirus family that has never been encountered before. Like other coronaviruses, it has come from animals. The virus can cause pneumonia-like symptoms. Those who have fallen ill are reported to suffer **coughs, fever and breathing difficulties** (*influenza does not usually cause shortness of breath*). As this is viral pneumonia, antibiotics are of no use. The antiviral drugs we have against flu will not work, and there is currently no vaccine. Recovery depends on the strength of the immune system.

How does it manifest itself?

1. It causes **a dry cough, fever and breathing difficulties**.
2. The virus first installs itself in the throat, causing inflammation and **a dry throat sensation**: this symptom can last for 3 to 4 days. The most important information is that corona virus infection does not cause a cold with a dripping nose or catarrhal cough, but **a dry cough**.
2. The virus travels through the humidity present in the airways, descends into the trachea and installs itself in the lungs, causing **pneumonia**. This step takes about 5 to 6 days.
3. **Pneumonia occurs with high fever and difficulty breathing**; it is not accompanied by the classic cold, but a person may have **the feeling of drowning**. In this case, it is advisable to contact a GP immediately. (*more information at the end of the article*)

How is it transferred from a person to a person and how can it be neutralised?

1. Virus transmission occurs mostly by direct contact, touching tissues or materials on which the virus is present: **washing hands frequently and disinfecting them is essential**. The virus only survives on your hands for about **ten minutes**, but in ten minutes many things can happen: when you rub your eyes or scratch your nose, for example, you allow the virus to enter your throat.
2. If an infected person sneezes in front of you, the droplets may land on your clothes. That is why keep **social distancing**. If there is **a distance of two metres**, an infected person will drop the virus on the ground and prevent it from landing on you.
3. **Avoid crowds**.

4. When the virus is found on metal surfaces, it survives for about 12 hours. So when you touch metal surfaces such as handles, doors, appliances, supports on buses or trains, etc, wash your hands well and disinfect them carefully.
5. Disinfect your keyboards and mobile phones frequently.
6. The virus can live nested in clothes and fabrics for about 6 to 12 hours, however, normal detergents can kill it. For clothes that cannot be washed every day, if you expose them to the sun, the virus will die.
7. The virus does not resist heat and dies if exposed to temperatures of 26-27 degrees; therefore, it is recommended to often consume hot drinks such as tea, herbal tea and broth during the day or simply hot water; hot liquids neutralize the virus. We should avoid drinking ice water or eating ice cubes or snow for those in the mountains (children).
8. Another reason for drinking even a few sips of hot water every 15 to 30 minutes is that your mouth and throat should be moist, never DRY. WHY? Even if the virus gets into your mouth, water or other liquids will sweep it away through the esophagus and into the stomach. Once in the belly, gastric acid in the stomach will kill all the virus. If you don't drink enough water frequently, the virus can get into your respiratory system including lungs.
9. You can gargle with a disinfectant solution that eliminates or minimises the amount of virus that could enter your throat. In doing so, you eliminate it before it goes down into the trachea and then into the lungs.
10. For those who can do it, expose yourself to the sun.
11. The virus crown is quite large, therefore, any type of mask can stop it. However, many sources warn that in normal life, for healthy people, special masks are NOT needed and may even be harmful (no explanation why). The situation is different for doctors and health professionals who are exposed to heavy virus loads and have to use special equipment.

When it comes to the lungs' infection, Taiwanese experts suggest doing a simple check that can be done every morning:

Take a deep breath and hold your breath for more than 10 seconds. If you successfully complete it without coughing, without discomfort, a sense of oppression, etc, this indicates there is essentially no infection.

Let us hope that the above simple and logical recommendations, when implemented by all of us, will ease the spread of the disease.

If you suspect you may be infected or you were in contact with an infected person or you have a fever, running nose, and a dry cough, obtain a referral for a nose and throat swab from your GP and call Covid-19 hotline on 1800 026 622 to make an appointment with your closest Covid-19 pathology collection centre. The hotline will inform you where your closest collection centre is situated.

Sources

1. www.who.int
2. www.health.gov.au
3. www.healthline.com/flu-allergies-coronavirus-different symptoms
4. www.theguardian.com/world/mar/coronavirus-symptoms-what-a
5. www.fortune.com/2020/0315/coronavirus-taiwan-cases-response

COVID-19 Additional information

Bożena Szymańska

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced that COVID-19 is a pandemic.
(www.who.int)

Australia is managing the COVID-19 outbreak as a health emergency, recently stepped up to human biosecurity emergency

Some data from: www.health.gov.au

Currently, Australia does not have widespread community transmission of COVID-19. Find out [how we are managing the outbreak](#) to slow the spread.

As at 6.30am on 18 March 2020, there have been **454 confirmed cases** of COVID-19 in Australia. There have been 40 new cases since 3.00pm that day.

| Location | Confirmed cases * |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Australian Capital Territory | 2 |
| New South Wales | 210 |
| Northern Territory | 0 |
| Queensland | 78 |
| South Australia | 32 |
| Tasmania | 7 |
| Victoria | 94 |
| Western Australia | 31 |
| Total ** | 454 |

Case details

Of the 454 confirmed cases in Australia, 43 have recovered and 5 have died from COVID-19.

228 cases were considered to be overseas acquired. Most of the overseas cases were acquired in the USA, Iran, Italy and the UK.

62 cases are contacts of previously confirmed cases.

The likely place of exposure for 138 reported cases is under investigation.

The source of infection for 26 cases is currently unknown.

Further information regarding the epidemiology of cases in Australia is provided in the [weekly epidemiology reports](#).

Across the world there have been more than **190,600 confirmed cases** of COVID-19 and more than **7,700 deaths**.

A **pandemic** (from [Greek](#) πᾶν *pan* "all" and δῆμος *demos* "people") is a [disease epidemic](#) that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple [continents](#), or worldwide. A widespread [endemic](#) disease with a stable number of infected people is not a pandemic.

The other two fairly recent endemics include:

1. SARS coronavirus disease (SARS-CoV).
2. Ebola virus disease (EVD)

SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) appeared in November 2002 in the Guangdong province of southern China and it was identified in 2003. SARS-CoV is thought to be an animal virus from an as-yet-uncertain animal reservoir, perhaps bats, that spread to other animals (civet cats) and then infected humans. It affected 26 countries and resulted in more than 8000 cases in 2003. Since then, a small number of cases has occurred as a result of laboratory accidents or, possibly, through animal-to-human transmission (Guangdong, China).

Other countries/areas in which chains of human-to-human transmission occurred after early importation of cases were Toronto in Canada, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, and Hanoi in Viet Nam.

Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a rare but severe, often fatal illness in humans. The 2014–2016 outbreak in West Africa was the largest Ebola outbreak since the virus was first discovered in 1976. The outbreak started in Guinea and then moved across land borders to Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission. The average EVD case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.