

Ministry of Health

Istituto Superiore di Sanità

The new coronavirus

Ten instructions to follow

Text written by the ISS Communication Task Force based on the following sources:

World Health Organization (WHO)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

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New coronavirus

Ten instructions to follow

1. Wash your hands frequently.
2. Avoid close contact with persons suffering from acute respiratory infections.
3. Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.
4. Cover your mouth and nose if you sneeze or cough.
5. Do not take anti-viral or antibiotic drugs, unless prescribed by a doctor.
6. Wipe down surfaces with chlorine or alcohol-based disinfectants.
7. Use a mask only if you suspect you are ill or are helping sick people.
8. Products and packages from other countries are not dangerous.
9. If you have a temperature, a cough or breathing difficulties, or if you have been in contact with someone with the virus, phone the ITCILOs Medical Service number: 011 6936 414 415 (active Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.). At night and at weekends, contact Reception.
10. Pets do not spread the new coronavirus.

1. Wash your hands frequently.

Washing and disinfecting your hands is a sure way of preventing infection.

Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If soap and water are not available, you can also use a 60% alcohol-based disinfectant.

Washing your hands kills the virus.

2. Avoid close contact with persons suffering from acute respiratory infections.

Keep at least one metre away from other people, especially if they are coughing or sneezing or have a temperature, because the virus is contained in droplets of saliva and can be transmitted at close quarters.

3. Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.

The virus is transmitted mainly through the airways by being breathed in, but it can also enter the body via the eyes, nose and mouth, so avoid touching these parts of your body with unwashed hands.

Your hands may come into contact with surfaces contaminated with the virus and thus transmit it to your body.

4. Cover your mouth and nose if you sneeze or cough.

If you have an acute respiratory infection, avoid close contact with other persons, cough into your elbow or a handkerchief (preferably a throw-away tissue), wear a mask and wash your hands. If you cover your mouth with your hand, you might contaminate objects and people you come into contact with.

5. Do not take anti-viral or antibiotic drugs, unless prescribed by a doctor.

At present, there is no scientific evidence that the use of anti-viral drugs prevents infection by the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Antibiotics are not effective against the virus, only against bacteria. The SARS-CoV-2 is a virus, therefore antibiotics are not used as a method of prevention or treatment, unless bacterial co-infections are also involved.

6. Wipe down surfaces with chlorine or alcohol-based disinfectants.

Chemical disinfectants capable of killing the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) on surfaces include bleach/chlorine-based disinfectants, solvents, ethanol at 75%, peracetic acid and chloroform.

Your doctor or pharmacist will be able to advise you.

7. Use a mask only if you suspect you are infected or are helping sick people.

The World Health Organization recommends you wear a mask only if you suspect you have contracted the new coronavirus and present symptoms such as coughing or sneezing, or if you are caring for a person suspected of being infected with the coronavirus (someone who has recently been to China and has respiratory symptoms/breathing difficulties).

Using a mask helps to limit the spread of the virus, but must be adopted in conjunction with other hygienic measures, such as careful hand-washing for at least 20 seconds.

It is not useful to wear one mask over another.

8. Products and packages from other countries are not dangerous.

The World Health Organization has stated that persons receiving packages from China are not in danger of contracting the new coronavirus, because it is unable to live for a long time on surfaces. So far there is no evidence that objects, produced in China or elsewhere, can transmit the new coronavirus (SARS CoV-2).

9. If you have a temperature, a cough or breathing difficulties, or if you have been in contact with someone with the virus, phone the ITCILO's Medical Service number: 011 6936 414 415 (active Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.). At night and at weekends, contact Reception.

The incubation period for the Covid 19 virus is between 1 and 14 days. If you have had contact with an infected person and have a cough, temperature and breathing difficulties, stay in your room and phone one of the above numbers. If you are not living alone, wear a mask or use a throw-away tissue to protect others when you cough, and wash your hands frequently.

10. Pets do not spread the new coronavirus.

For the time being, there is no evidence that pets such as cats and dogs can be infected with the virus.

However, it is always wise to wash your hands with soap and water after being in contact with pets.