



European  
Reference  
Network

MetabERN

European Reference Network  
for Hereditary Metabolic Disorders

## GENERAL INFORMATION ON COVID-19

### WHAT IS COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus called SARS-Cov-2.

### WHERE DOES THE VIRUS COME FROM?

Coronaviruses are a type of virus that usually infect animals, but some of them can also infect humans. SARS-Cov-2, the virus causing COVID-19, first emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

### HOW DOES THE VIRUS SPREAD?

The coronavirus is transmitted from one person to another mainly through small respiratory droplets released when sneezing, coughing or exhaling during close interaction (less than one meter distance).

These droplets can be inhaled or can land on objects or surfaces that other people touch; these people may then become infected if they touch their mouth, nose or eyes with their contaminated hands. The virus is known to survive on various surfaces from a few hours to several days.

The virus is transmitted by infected people with symptoms such as cough, but some evidence suggests that the transmission can happen also two days before any symptom develops.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms of COVID-19 vary in severity. Some people have no symptoms at all, while most patients show fever, dry cough, tiredness, muscle pain and difficulty breathing. These symptoms begin gradually and are usually mild, with 80% of people recovering from the disease with no need of special treatment. The most severe cases develop severe pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, sepsis and septic shock, which can all cause death.

## WHO IS AT HIGH RISK FOR COVID-19?

The situation is evolving rapidly, and we are still collecting data on the effect of SARS-Cov-2 on the general population and in patients with specific diseases, such as those with a rare metabolic disease.

People over the age of 65, immunocompromised patients (e.g. cancer, bone marrow or organ transplants) and those with an underlying disease such as hypertension, diabetes, or a chronic respiratory, kidney or cardiovascular disease are more at risk of developing severe forms of COVID-19.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM THE VIRUS?

Since the virus enters the body through the mouth, nose and/or eyes, be careful not to touch your face with unwashed hands.

Wash your hands often and carefully with water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based solutions, gels or tissues [Watch the video on how to wash hands correctly [HERE](#)].

Stay at home as much as possible and avoid contact with people, keeping a distance of at least one meter.

When you sneeze or cough cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue and dispose of the tissue in a closed bin.

Use a face mask only if you are caring for someone with COVID-19 or if you develop symptoms. If you feel unwell, stay at home and seek medical attention if you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

## IS THERE A CURE OR A VACCINE FOR COVID-19?

At the moment there is no vaccine and no specific drug to prevent or treat the disease. Various vaccines and medicine are being investigated and tested in clinical trials, while severe cases of COVID-19 are being hospitalized to receive supportive care.

## WHAT SHALL I DO IF I DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

In case of COVID-19 symptoms and suspected infection seek medical attention immediately. If a family member is symptomatic, try to isolate him/her as much as possible.

## NATIONAL INFORMATION RESOURCES ON COVID-19

*LINKS:* <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china/sources-updated>

### *TELEPHONE NUMBERS:*

Austria (+43) 800 555 621

Belgium (+32) 800 14689

Bulgaria (+359) 2 807 87 57

Croatia (+385) 91 468 30 32 / 99 468 30 01

Cyprus (+357) 1420

Czechia (+420) 724 810 106 / 725 191 367

Denmark (+45) 72 22 74 59

Estonia (+372) 634 6630 / 1220

Finland (+358) 295 535 535

France (+33) 800 130 000

Germany (+49) 30 346 465 100

Greece (+30) 210 521 2054

Hungary (+36) 80 277 455 / 80 277 456

Iceland (+354) 544 4113 / 1700

Ireland (+353) 1850 24 1850\*

Italy (+39) 1500

Latvia (+371) 673 87 661

Liechtenstein (+423) 230 30 30

Lithuania (+370) 8 618 79984

Luxembourg (+352) 8002 8080

Malta (+356) 21324086

Netherlands (+31) 800 1351

Norway (+47) 815 55 015

Poland (+48) 800 190 590

Portugal (+351) 808 24 24 24

Romania (+40) 800 800 358

Slovakia (+421) 917 222 682

Slovenia (+386) 31 646 617 / 080 1404\*

Spain See regional numbers [HERE](#)

Sweden (+46) 113 13

Switzerland (+41) 58 463 00 00

UK (+44) 111\*

\* numbers dialled only from the respective country

*Sources: ECDC, WHO, CDC*