

Patient information from DEGAM – „Have I contracted Corona virus ?“

Important: Even though there is a decline in new infections with the new Corona virus [SARS-CoV-2] it should always be taken into account if a patient shows respiratory symptoms (sore throat, cough, runny nose) and/or fever, disturbed sense of taste or smell.

What is Corona virus?

The SARS-CoV-2 virus which first appeared in China in November 2019 has spread all over the world. The disease has been named Covid-19. The virus causes respiratory symptoms of variable severity, in Germany as well as throughout the world. Most of the time the infection seems to be rather mild.

Two days to two weeks past contraction (5-6 days on average) symptoms may appear which resemble a flu or a bronchitis.

Have I contracted corona virus disease?

Any affliction involving respiratory or general symptoms (for example fever) may be caused by SARS-CoV-2, especially if you had contact to a confirmed case. First of all, stay at home.

A test for Corona virus should be done, if possible at a testing center. There will be regional differences as to whether that is possible. Please discuss with your family doctor.

Please use the following contact options:

- Family doctor
Important: Please phone/fax/email ahead to coordinate your visit.
- the medical on-call service, telephone number 116117
- local testing center, if available
- your public health department (ZIP code search: <https://tools.rki.de/plztool/>)

Important: Before entering a doctor's office please put on a face mask (like when shopping).

The course of infection/disease

For the most part, the infection only causes mild symptoms, especially in young and healthy individuals. Entirely symptomless infections are possible, too. However, these patients can still transmit the disease.

Some patients will develop a more severe course and admission to hospital may become necessary.

Elderly people with the following preexisting conditions are more likely to suffer from more severe forms of Covid-19:

- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes mellitus
- Chronic lung diseases
- Impaired immune system

Age itself (without preexisting conditions) represents a mild to moderate risk only.

If you develop severe symptoms (marked fever, shortness of breath) please contact your doctor immediately, in case of emergency call 112.

How can I protect myself?

Recommended hygienic measures that help protect you from infection:

- Avoid all non-necessary personal contact with other people.
 - If you do meet people from another household, meet outside if possible.
 - Keep a distance of about 2m from other people – especially when inside. Assure good room ventilation. This helps protect at-risk groups like the elderly or people with preexisting conditions.
 - Wear the mandated face mask while shopping or using public transport.
 - Frequently wash your hands with soap and water, or clean them with an alcoholic gel (usually available in local drugstores).
 - „Proper“ coughing/sneezing with a handkerchief covering your mouth and nose (discard hanky afterwards), or coughing/sneezing into the upper part of your sleeve - do not spray your hands!
- If you feel sick, stay at home (this holds for patients with respiratory symptoms as well as for people at risk). If you think it necessary, don't hesitate to call your family doctor.

Am I immune to Corona virus?

Only if you have had a confirmed infection with Corona virus or if you developed Covid-19, you can assume immunity. Currently it is unknown how long such immunity will last. The antibody tests available at this time cannot give certainty and should not be used to try to assess immunity in individual patients. These tests should only be used in clinical studies.

Current measures

To deal with the Covid-19 pandemic everyone's solidarity is needed, especially the solidarity of the Healthy with the Sick and of the Young with the Elderly, and not just within your very own family.

Please help and mind the nationwide measures: Keeping a distance of 2m AND wearing a mask in public transport and shopping areas. These measures slow down the spreading of the Corona virus.

Where possible please support relatives, friends, and neighbours when they are in need of someone to talk to, of being cheered up, or of any other kind of help.

By doing so you help protect people at risk, and you help to avoid a rapid increase in severe cases which might lead to an overload of the healthcare system and, thereby, to avoidable deaths.