

COVID-19 SUMMARY GUIDANCE #1

Modes of transmission and incubation period

The transmission of COVID-19 can occur as follows:

1. Most often, COVID-19 is spread from person to person among close contacts.
2. Person-to-person spread occurs mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person speaks, coughs or sneezes.
3. These droplets can land in the mouths, noses or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
4. When a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches their own mouth, nose or eyes.
5. Transmission can occur when patients are symptomatic, but also before any symptoms appear, and even from asymptomatic patients.
6. Airborne transmission may be possible in specific circumstances and settings in which procedures or support treatments that generate aerosols are performed.
7. Patients may remain contagious up to two weeks after the remission of symptoms.
8. In pregnant women, intrauterine or perinatal transmission has not been identified.
9. In breastfeeding women, the virus has not been detected in breast milk. Mothers with COVID-19 can breastfeed. For breastfeeding safely, mothers should follow good respiratory hygiene, hold their new-born skin-to-skin, share a room with their baby, wash hands before and after touching the baby, and keep all surfaces clean
10. There is currently no robust evidence of human infection with SARS-CoV-2 caused by infectious aerosols distributed through the ventilation system ducts of heating, ventilation and air conditioning. The risk is rated as very low.
11. Regarding the possibility of reinfection, the immune response to COVID-19 is not yet understood. Patients with MERS-CoV infection are unlikely to be re-infected shortly after they recover, but it is not yet known whether similar immune protection will be observed for patients with COVID-19.
12. The median incubation period is estimated at 5.1 days. This suggests that the 14-day quarantine period recommended by the WHO is reasonable. 97.5% of people who develop symptoms will do so within 11.5 days of exposure.

For details and supporting references, consult the complete guidance document at www.fip.org/coronavirus

This document is based on the available evidence and recommendations of reputable organisations at the time of publishing. It will be updated as new knowledge becomes available. 14 July 2020.