

COVID-19

Information for adults in home isolation

The symptoms of COVID-19 infection vary between individuals and often change from day to day. The most common are muscle ache, headache and dry cough. Other common symptoms are gastrointestinal discomfort, fever and shortness of breath. The majority of people develop mild symptoms, but some become more ill and may need hospitalisation. The duration of the illness is different between individuals.

If your condition worsens, you may be referred for a further examination at the COVID-19 outpatient department located at Birkiborg, next to Landspítali University Hospital in Fossvogur, or you may receive a visit from a doctor. The outpatient department collaborates with other departments of the hospital and other professions such as deacons and midwives.

It is possible to infect others even if there are few or no symptoms, so it is always important to follow the instructions for isolation. Instructions on isolation and quarantine can be found on the website www.covid.is.

This educational material is based on current knowledge of COVID-19 and may change as knowledge increases.

Examples of symptoms

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Chills or cold • Heaviness, gasping or pain when breathing • Dry cough • Mucus that is coughed up • Headache • Shortness of breath at rest and during exercise • Bone and muscle aches • Sore throat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny nose • Lack of appetite • Nausea • Vomiting • Change in sense of smell and taste • Abdominal pain • Diarrhoea • Weakness • Anxiety |
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It is important to monitor your temperature by measuring it twice a day and recording the result.

General information

Fluid intake

Drink plenty of fluids, especially if you have:

- Had a high temperature or fever that has lasted a long time.
- Been sweating a lot.
- Little appetite to drink.
- Vomited or have had diarrhoea.

If the above symptoms are present, it is advisable to not only drink water, as essential salts are lost from the body. Drinks such as Gatorade, Powerade or Aquarius are recommended and are available from pharmacies and supermarkets. It is also recommended to monitor how much you drink, for example by writing down the amount of fluid or the number of glasses. As a reference, each glass is about 150–200 ml, and it is good to aim to drink two litres a day, or 10 glasses.

Urination

Make sure you go to the toilet regularly, and the colour of your urine should be light yellow. If urine is dark yellow, it may be a sign of dehydration and it is advisable to drink more.

Food

Try to eat regularly during the day or at the time of the day when you feel best, for example after taking painkillers. As the sense of taste and smell often changes and lack of appetite and even nausea are common, it is important not to skip eating. If you have little appetite or nausea, you can try to eat more often and a little at a time. If the nausea is severe or you vomit repeatedly, you may be given anti-nausea medication. Occasionally, intravenous fluids may need to be given.

Fever

It is recommended to take your temperature at least in the evening and in the morning. If your temperature exceeds 38,5°C or causes discomfort, it is recommended to take paracetamol to lower the temperature.

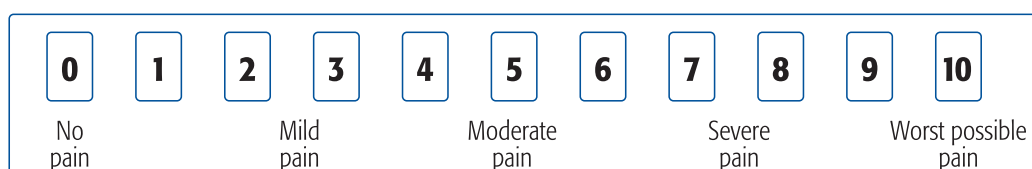
Shortness of breath and coughing

It is important to monitor whether you are short of breath during exercise or at rest. Shortness of breath can be assessed on a scale of 0–10, where zero is no shortness of breath and 10 is so severe that it is difficult to speak. If you have shortness of breath, lying on your stomach with a pillow under your hips and shoulders can help.

The medicine Parkodin can reduce coughing. This medicine is prescription only, and caution should be exercised when taking it with paracetamol. You can also use cough suppressants that are available over the counter in pharmacies.

Pain

To measure the intensity of pain, you can use a pain scale where 0 means no pain and 10 the worst pain possible. If the pain persists, it is recommended to take painkillers regularly throughout the day.



Paracetamol and Parkodin

- Paracetamol is the first choice for fever and pain. The recommended dose for adults is 1000 mg (two tablets) up to four times a day, every 6 hours.
- If paracetamol is not sufficient, Parkodin (paracetamol/codeine) may be used in combination with paracetamol according to the instructions below.

Special care

- If you are taking two paracetamol tablets at a time (1000 mg in total), do not take Parkodin in addition to that dose.
- If you are taking two Parkodin tablets at a time, do not take any paracetamol in addition to that dose.
- If you take one Parkodin tablet, you can take one tablet of paracetamol (500 mg) at the same time if needed.
- The maximum dose of Parkodin is two tablets at a time, a maximum of four times a day. The maximum dose of paracetamol is two tablets (each 500 mg tablet) at a time, a maximum of four times a day. If the medicines are taken together, a maximum of 8 tablets can be taken in total over 24 hours.

Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

It is safe to use NSAIDs such as ibuprofen as a painkiller and anti-inflammatory medicine. The recommended dose for adults is 400 mg, at most three times a day, i.e. every 8 hours. The drug can be taken between paracetamol doses. In this way, continuous pain relief can be achieved, if necessary.

- Patients on anti-inflammatory drugs such as for rheumatoid arthritis are advised to continue using the drug even if they develop COVID-19.
- It is important that you have adequate fluid intake if you are taking NSAIDs.
- People with impaired kidney function, diabetes or treatment for high blood pressure should only take NSAIDs in consultation with a doctor.

Light exercise

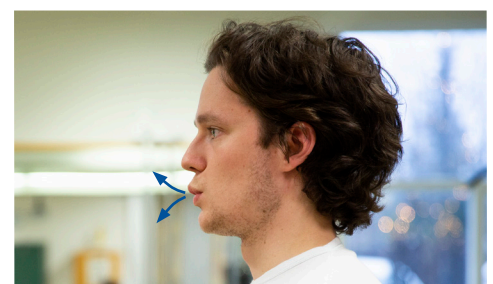
Light indoor exercise is recommended if health allows. Light exercise can reduce weakness and improve breathing. Exertion or working out is not recommended.

Breathing exercises

To improve breathing and reduce the risk of pneumonia, it is necessary to do breathing exercises. It is also good to change the position you lie in bed often, i.e. to lie alternately on the sides and back and even on your stomach.

It is recommended to do breathing exercises every 1–2 hours during the day. If bronchodilators are used, breathing exercises are performed 10 minutes after their use. It is best to do breathing exercises in an upright or sitting position; then it is easier to breathe deeply and fill the lungs with air. Relax your neck, shoulders and chest muscles, and place your arms on the armrests of the chair or pillow or place them on your lap.

- Inhale slowly through the nose (with the mouth closed), as when inhaling at rest, and count in your head “one, two” during inhalation (do not breathe deeply).
- Then a nozzle is placed on the lips and air exhaled through the mouth, as when whistling, but no whistle is heard. Count “one, two, three, four” whilst exhaling.
- It is recommended to repeat the breathing exercises 5–8 times.



A nozzle is placed on the lips and air exhaled through the mouth

Medication

If you are taking medication on a regular basis, you should not change your medication without consulting your doctor.

Ending isolation

- Those with COVID-19 must isolate according to Icelandic regulations (www.covid.is). Please note that the time period of an ongoing isolation cannot be shortened by undergoing a new test.
- You do not need to go for testing or an antibody test at the end of isolation.
- To reduce the risk of infecting others, follow the instructions below:
 - Clean your living space with soap and water, such as the floor, tables, chairs, faucet, sink, toilet and doorknobs.
 - Disinfect other surfaces and items that are touched regularly, such as telephones, remote controls and cosmetics.
 - Wash all used clothing and other items such as towels and bedding.
 - Take a shower and wear clean clothes after cleaning and before leaving the house.
 - Avoid close contact with others for the next two weeks. Continue to wash your hands thoroughly and use disinfectant and a mask as instructed on www.covid.is. Particular care must be taken in dealing with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with chronic illnesses and infants.

Certificates

Certificates for quarantine and isolation can be obtained at www.heilsuvera.is. This requires an electronic ID. Those who do not have an electronic ID can obtain a certificate from the COVID-19 outpatient department at the end of isolation.

Important telephone numbers

It is necessary to report if symptoms suddenly worsen.

Call 543 1960 (COVID-19 outpatient department) if symptoms worsen or, for example, the following symptoms occur:

- Shortness of breath at rest.
- Difficulty breathing that prevents you from lying down.
- Difficulty in performing the necessary treatment associated with chronic illness.
- Growing weakness and lack of energy and no one can help you at home with hygiene and nutrition.
- Persistent temperatures above 38°C for five days or more.

Call 112 if the following symptoms occur:

- Great difficulty breathing, difficulty in catching your breath or speaking more than one word at a time.
- Severe chest pain.
- Disorientation or delirium.
- Difficulty waking up or decreased consciousness.
- Blue lips.

Show your relatives this list so they can call for help for you if needed.