

HEALTHY PEOPLE – HEALTHY BUSINESS

No. 16 | 2020



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Dear reader,

Our current Newsletter was already to be published when the dynamic situation of the past days and weeks called for a change of topic. Although the new Measles Protection Act came into force recently it does not have priority these days. We will submit the outstanding information of the Protection Act, our new colleges and other knowledgeable news to a later point in time. Promise!

Due to the actual course of events we would like to answer the most common questions of companies dealing with the Coronavirus. Therefore we created a special Corona- Newsletter for you, based on latest RKI-Information.

How is the Virus transmitted?

Primarily the virus is transmitted by droplet infection with face to face contact. Contact is defined as a period of contact time lasting longer than 15 minutes in a distance less than 1,5 meters.

Transmission through contaminated surfaces such as doorknobs is theoretically possible but has not been proven yet. Transmission by urine or feces is not possible.

What are common symptoms?

The most common symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Other unspecific symptoms can occur as well.

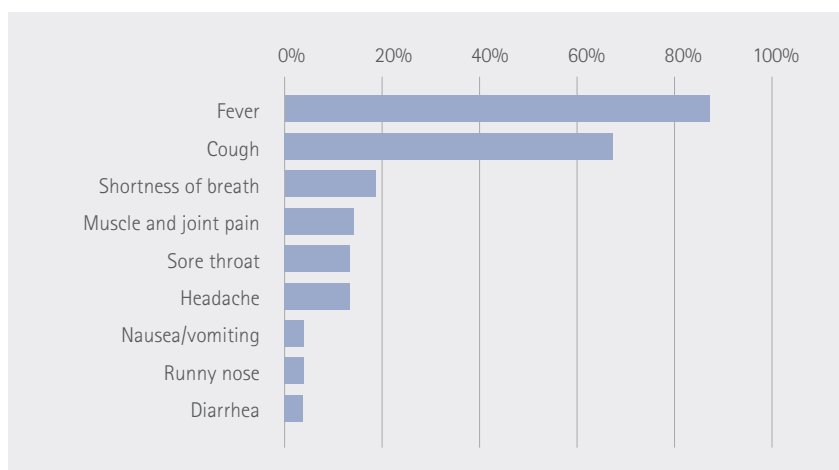


Diagram: Occurrence of the most common symptoms of Covid- 19 cases in China. (n= 55,924 laboratory confirmed cases)
Source: Robert Koch-Institut

How and where can I be tested?

You will receive a test by the following criteria:

1. Personal Contact to a laboratory confirmed case and having symptoms
2. Returning from an area of risk and having symptoms
3. When your general physician suspects a SARS-CoV- 2 infection

The tests are organized by the health authority and are performed by a throat smear. Information about the local test conditions can be found on the internet sites of the health offices.

How does the infection progress?

The course of illness is mild up to moderate in most cases of infection. The main symptoms are cough and fever. Very few cases can have a severe or lethal course of illness (see risk groups below). The incubation period, meaning the time span from contagion to the occurrence of first symptoms is an average of 5- 6 days. However symptoms can occur between day 1 and 14 of contagion. Infectivity, meaning the possibility of infecting others, lasts up to 8 days after the onset of symptoms. 2 - 3 days after the symptoms have subsided, there is no more risk of contagion.

Who needs to be put in quarantine?

Persons with contact to a confirmed case or returnees from high-risk areas are recommended to stay in home quarantine for 14 days. The recommendation of quarantine is independent from the occurrence of symptoms at this point.

If no symptoms occur during this period of time, the return to work after 14 days is possible.

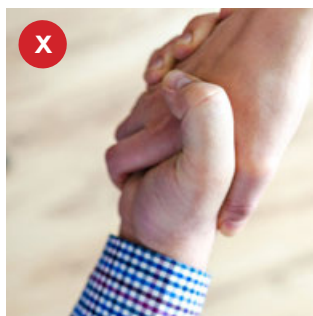
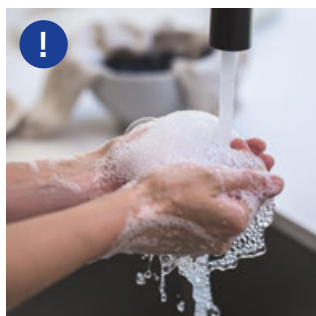
If symptoms occur within the time of quarantine a report to the Gesundheitsamt (responsible health authority) is necessary. The Gesundheitsamt will initiate further examination.

Mild cases of illness are treated by general physicians on an outpatient basis. In cases of severe illness the general physician will arrange an inpatient admission.

When can I get back to work?

According to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) you can get back to work when you have been free of symptoms for 48 hours. Keep in mind that the regional conditions of health authorities have to be considered.

The health department in Aachen for example, allows the resumption of work three days after symptoms have subsided.



How can I protect myself and others?

- ▶ Cough and sneeze in the crook of your arm or in a handkerchief, keep distance from other people, hold and turn in another direction
- ▶ Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap
- ▶ Keep your hands away from your face
- ▶ Keep a distance of 1.5 meters to other people
- ▶ Avoid shaking hands
- ▶ Ventilate office (and private) rooms regularly
- ▶ In case of illness- stay at home, do not go to work!

Who is part of the risk groups?

Severe cases can also occur without previous illnesses but the following groups of people have an increased risk of severe outcomes:

- ▶ Elderly people (from around 50–60 years)
- ▶ Smokers
- ▶ People with:
 - Certain previous diseases of the heart (e.g. coronary heart disease)
 - Certain previous diseases of the lungs (e.g. asthma, chronic bronchitis)
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Cancer
 - Weakened immune system (e.g. due to a disease including an immune deficiency, or by taking certain drugs weakening the immune system; for example cortisone)



Are there certain risks for pregnant or breastfeeding women?

According to the latest data pregnant women have no increased risk for a severe case of COVID-19 infection. The virus is not transferable to the unborn child and could not be proven to be transmitted by breast milk.

How are we supposed to deal with ASA meetings? Is it advisable to avoid meetings?

ASA meetings are – regardless of the current situation – the central institution for coordination of all measures concerning occupational health and safety in the company.

By law, the meetings serve to convene all key people coordinating occupational health protection. Therefore, these appointments, in compliance with hygiene rules mentioned above, should take place, to keep up with current developments, adapt possible restrictions and individual measures within the company.

In order to organize and carry out the ASA meetings all forms of modern communication (video conference, telephone conference or similar) are possible and desirable when practicable.

If personal meetings are inevitable in the company, hygiene measures including foremost the distance to the next conversation partner must be observed.

Do we have to disinfect surfaces? (Handrails, doorknobs, telephones, keyboards)?

The influence of surface disinfection on the prevention of infections is rather overestimated. So far, no case of infection via contaminated surfaces has been detected (see above). Also the only feasible way to keep a door handle germ-free would be disinfecting it immediately after each (!) use.

If disinfection is unavoidable, e.g. in medical areas, clean rooms or in the food industry, disinfectants with the label „virucidal“, „limited virucidal“ or „limited virucidal PLUS“ are to be used. The Robert Koch Institute, RKI has published recommended disinfectants and procedures on its website.

What measures and precautions can we take within our company?

The most important measure is communication and consistent implementation of general hygiene Regulations. There also are a number of other ways to combat the spread of the virus. However, since every company has its own spatial or organizational characteristics, we recommend tailored, individual measures specifically for your company.

We are happy to help. Just contact us if you need support.

Where can we get more information?

Reliable information and answers to many questions about the Corona virus can be found on the Website of the Robert Koch Institute at www.rki.de.

And please: Fake news on social media should not make you insecure!



"Crisis, it is said, make the best (and worst) in people emerge ..."



Sincerely Yours,
Michael Suchodoll