



# Information about COVID-19 (*CO*rona *V*irus *D*isease) due to SARS-CoV-2

*Friday 28 February, 4 pm*

Given the evolving nature of the spread of COVID-19 in risk areas, the Monegasque authorities have adopted a stance of constant vigilance and are maintaining regular contact with their French and Italian counterparts. The measures announced by the Prince's Government are thus liable to change as the situation surrounding the disease develops.

The recommendations are intended to be pragmatic, and aim to cause as little disruption to family life as possible. The Prince's Government calls on all citizens to act responsibly.

This notice, which is addressed to residents and workers in the Principality of Monaco, offers clear, factual information about COVID-19.

On this platform, you can find all of the answers to your questions about the coronavirus COVID-19, as well as health and travel advice. For information about any situation not covered by this notice, please contact the **Department of Health Affairs (+377 98 98 84 20)**.

## **What is a coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold (some seasonal viruses are coronaviruses) to more serious diseases such as MERS or SARS. The virus that has been identified in China is a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. The disease caused by this virus has been named COVID-19.

## **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

The main symptoms are:

- Sore throat
- Dry cough
- High temperature
- Shivering
- Feeling faint
- Muscle aches



- Breathing difficulties

One of these symptoms is sufficient to prompt a diagnosis.

The elderly and those with existing health conditions (diabetes, immune deficiency, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, etc.) are more likely to develop a severe form of the disease.

### **Are there some people who are at risk of developing a severe form of the disease?**

As with many infectious diseases, people with chronic underlying conditions (people with respiratory disease, those who are frail or elderly, etc.) have a higher risk of developing a more severe form of the disease.

### **What is the mode of transmission?**

Close contact (within less than two metres) with an infected person is required for the virus to be transmitted, and the longer the contact, the greater the risk.

Transmission occurs via respiratory droplets containing the virus, which are expelled when people cough or blow their noses.

There are two ways that people can become infected:

- If droplets directly reach the mouths or noses of people nearby (within a radius of two metres);
- It is also possible to become infected by touching a surface or object which has been contaminated with respiratory secretions (door handles, when shaking someone's hand, etc.) and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes with your hand.

To date, there is no evidence that someone with no symptoms at all can pass the disease on to others.

### **What is the incubation period for the disease?**

According to current understanding, the incubation period for COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days, which means that if someone who has been exposed does not develop symptoms within 14 days, they have not contracted the disease.

### **How is it diagnosed?**

The disease is diagnosed by identifying the virus using a complex, non-automated technique, RT-PCR. In France, only university hospitals have this capability.



### **What treatments are available?**

No specific treatment for this new coronavirus has so far been identified. Several treatments currently used against other viral diseases are now being evaluated to see if they could be used to treat COVID-19. In the meantime, treatment focuses on symptoms.

### **How can the spread of the infection be prevented?**

In the absence of a vaccine, the only way to avoid becoming infected is to avoid exposure to the virus.

The same measures that help to prevent the spread of other respiratory viruses (including flu) apply:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using hand sanitiser to clean your hands is also effective.
- Clean your hands before leaving home and when you return.
- Clean your hands as you arrive at work and when you leave.
- Clean your hands before eating.
- Clean your hands before and after engaging in sport or exercise.
- Clean your hands before and after using public transport.
- Use a single-use tissue when you cough or blow your nose, then throw it in the bin immediately.
- Do not attend school or college if you feel unwell.
- Never touch your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands or using hand sanitiser.
- Avoid contact with people who are ill.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces regularly.
- If you have symptoms, wear a surgical mask when visiting the doctor.

### **What type of mask should I wear?**

Surgical masks prevent people who are infected from passing on the disease, but offer no protection when worn by those who are not infected.

FFP2 masks are not effective if they are not properly fitted and uncomfortable to wear; they are reserved for use by emergency and healthcare staff only.

### **What should I do if I have visited or travelled through a risk area?**

If you have visited or travelled through a risk area, you should stay at home and take your temperature twice a day. You should not go to school or work for 14 days and must not visit public places (restaurants, bars, sports facilities, etc.), go to the cinema or attend performances. If you develop a fever or symptoms, you should phone 18.



### **From what distance can a person infect other people?**

The disease is transmitted via droplets of saliva (when sneezing or coughing). It is therefore believed that close contact with someone who is ill is required to transmit the disease: sharing a home, being in close contact at a distance of less than two metres with someone who coughs or sneezes, or less than one metre while having a conversation if no protective measures are used.

### **What steps should be taken if a person has symptoms and believes they may be infected with COVID-19 (particularly if they have visited or travelled through a risk area)?**

If the person is at home, they should remain there and phone 18.

### **How serious is the disease?**

Available information suggests that the virus can cause symptoms similar to those caused by a mild case of flu, as well as more severe symptoms. The disease can also progress over time in the same patient. Patients with chronic pre-existing conditions such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, liver disease and respiratory disease, as well as the elderly, appear to be more likely to develop severe forms of COVID-19.

### **What is the advice in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19?**

Due to the fact that there is a minimum incubation period of two days during which an infected person is not contagious, **contact persons are not required to take any specific precautions** while awaiting test results (24 hours).

### **What measures would be taken if a case of COVID-19 was confirmed?**

The Department of Health Affairs would undertake a public health investigation to identify contact persons and assess the risk of the disease spreading.

### **What measures would be taken with respect to contact persons of an individual infected with COVID-19 (confirmed case)?**

The following are considered to be contact persons:

- Anyone who has touched the person infected with COVID-19 or been within less than 2 metres of them for more than 15 minutes;
- Anyone who has spoken to the person infected with COVID-19;
- Anyone who has cleaned biological fluids from the person infected with COVID-19 without protection;



- Close friends;
- Anyone living in the same home or visiting the same dormitory as the person infected with COVID-19.

Contact persons are not considered to be infected and the probability that they will infect others is very low, however:

- They will be confined to their homes for 14 days;
- They will take their temperature twice a day;
- They will be subject to medical monitoring;
- They may undergo biological testing during this period.

If a contact person develops COVID-19 (fever, symptoms or positive test), they become a confirmed case and the public health investigation is expanded to search for contact persons.

### **Is it possible to predict how the epidemic will develop?**

Modelling work is underway. The health authorities are carefully monitoring developments in the situation around the world.

### **Do items imported from a risk area pose a danger?**

In light of available data on the ability of coronaviruses to survive outside (three hours on dry, inert surfaces) and given transport times and conditions, the risk of becoming infected by the new coronavirus as a result of touching an imported item is considered to be nil.

Apply standard hygiene measures (washing hands, cleaning surfaces) after opening a package.

### **What should I do if I have returned from a risk area in the last 14 days?**

The Prince's Government recommends isolation from work or school. In other words, you should not go to work or school, and you should contact the Department of Health Affairs on 98 98 92 18:

After interviewing the patient, doctors will issue a sick note, allowing daily social security allowances to be paid without delay. Employees who are obliged to remain at home will not therefore lose any income. This eligibility for allowances applies to all employees in the private and public sectors.

Special arrangements may be made for people who are not showing any symptoms and work for organisations classed as critical infrastructure operators. Such individuals may be allowed to continue working, subject to agreeing to wear a mask or have their temperature taken twice a day.



Generally speaking, the Prince's Government recommends **temporary teleworking**.

### **If I am in isolation and not attending work, what impact will this have on my income?**

Employees who are obliged to remain at home will not lose any income. Daily social security allowances will be paid without delay. Eligibility for allowances applies to all employees in the private and public sectors.

### **I spent several days on a family holiday in a risk area. Can I send my children to school or crèche?**

Parents returning from risk areas are asked not to send their children to school or crèche for 14 days following the date of their return.

The list of risk areas will be updated on a regular basis.

### **What precautions have been taken for the return to school on Monday 2 March 2020?**

It was decided on Tuesday 26 February 2020 that the Principality's schools would open as normal. However, preventive measures will be in place to reduce the spread of coronavirus as far as possible.

**Parents returning from risk areas** are asked **not to send their children to school or crèche** for 14 days following the date of their return. The list of risk areas will be updated on a regular basis.

**Hand sanitisers** will be made available to schools and crèches. Please note that these sanitisers are safe for children to use.

### **What precautions are being taken with regard to employees in the Principality of Monaco?**

The same approach is recommended for adults and children: **people returning from risk areas should stay at home**.

In this context, it will be up to those affected to **contact the Department of Health Affairs**.

A medical inspector will issue a **sick note**, allowing daily social security allowances to be paid without delay. Employees who are obliged to remain at home will not therefore lose any income. This **eligibility for allowances** applies to all employees in the private and public sectors.



Special arrangements may be made for people who are not showing any symptoms and work for organisations classed as critical infrastructure operators. Such individuals may be allowed to continue working, subject to agreeing to certain measures which may include wearing a mask or having their temperature taken regularly.

Generally speaking, the Prince's Government recommends **temporary teleworking**.

### What precautions are being taken to protect the elderly?

In nursing homes: posters describing precautionary measures will be displayed to **inform patients and their families**, and **stronger disinfection measures** will be adopted. The same approach will be adopted in units of Princess Grace Hospital deemed to be "sensitive".

At home: people living at home will be covered by the **general measures** introduced for the population as a whole.

### What measures should be taken with regard to travel?

In general terms, the Prince's Government recommends **avoiding all private and/or business travel to risk areas**. Possible exemptions for the government will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The list of risk areas will be updated on a regular basis.

### What preventive measures are being taken regarding conventions and events?

At this stage, the Monegasque authorities are not recommending that events should be cancelled or postponed. This position will be reviewed regularly. Nonetheless, some precautions should be taken.

Organisers will be advised not to invite people from **areas exposed to the virus**.

The following **disinfection measures** are recommended: make hand sanitisers available to the public, clean premises more frequently.

### Can I go to a concert or convention being held in Monaco?

At this stage, the Monegasque authorities are not recommending that events should be cancelled or postponed. This position will be reviewed regularly. Nonetheless, some precautions should be taken.

Organisers will be advised not to invite people from areas exposed to the virus.



The following disinfection measures are recommended: make hand sanitisers available, clean premises more frequently.

**I have some more questions. Who can I contact?**

If you have **any questions relating to the coronavirus** that are not covered in this FAQ, please contact Dr Eric Voiglio at the Department of Health Affairs on **98 98 48 50 (during office hours)** or on **06 78 63 85 68 (emergencies only)**, or by email: [evoiglio@gouv.mc](mailto:evoiglio@gouv.mc)

**If you develop signs of respiratory infection within 14 days of returning from a risk area:**

- **To avoid infecting others, please do not visit your normal doctor or the Accident and Emergency Unit.**
- **Self-isolate to avoid contact with your friends and family.**
- **Contact the Fire & Emergency Service on 18 or 112 to report your symptoms and the fact that you have recently visited a risk area.**