

**Hygiene at home: a bulwark against Covid-19
to be protect from SARS-CoV-2**
Press release of the French National Academy of Medicine

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SARS-CoV-2 (agent/origin of Covid-19 infection) is transmitted:

Primarily:

- by droplets emitted from the nose and mouth (spluttering) when coughing, sneezing, but also when speaking, singing and screaming;
- by direct contact between people: shaking hands, hugging, kissing;

Secondarily through indirect contact: objects contaminated by an infected person.

The risk of contamination does not disappear when you return home, quite the contrary.

The National Academy of Medicine wishes to recall the fundamental rules of hygiene at home which it is essential to observe in the current epidemic context, especially in families with children. Observance of these rules considerably reduces the risk of transmitting or contracting the virus within the household; it also protects against the transmission of other viruses (flu, colds, gastroenteritis, etc.) and pathogenic bacteria.

1. Respiratory hygiene rules

- **Cover your mouth and nose** if you cough or sneeze, preferably with a disposable tissue, throw away the tissue immediately and wash your hands immediately before touching anything. If possible, place a small trash can in each room to dispose of used tissues. **If a disposable tissue is not available**, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.
- **Keep at least one metre away** from other people in the household when eating, talking, coughing or sneezing.
- **Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes and mouth**, which can spread respiratory viruses through contaminated hands.
- **Ventilate the housing** by opening the windows for at least 20 minutes in the morning and evening and during houseworking.

2. Frequent hand washing

Hands are a very effective vehicle for SARS-CoV-2.

When?

- As soon as you get home from work, from shopping, from relaxing outing, after taking out the trash can...;
- after coughing or sneezing;
- before taking care of a child, an elderly or handicapped person;

- after every trip to the bathroom;
- after getting rid of the day's groceries;
- before cooking and before meals.

How do you do it?

- with soap and water, preferably liquid soap (which stays clean in its bottle, unlike bar soap, especially when it is bathed in a dish);
- rub your hands for at least 20 seconds;
- don't forget fingertips, interdigital spaces, nails, wrists;
- rinse thoroughly;
- dry with a clean towel (to be changed very regularly) or a single-use hand towel.

Alternative to hand washing: use a hydro-alcoholic solution to disinfect your hands. Hydro-alcoholic solutions disinfect but do not clean: so they cannot replace washing with soap and water when hands are dirty.

3. Environmental Hygiene

SARS-CoV-2 is a **so-called "enveloped" virus**, which is therefore fragile and unable to survive in the environment for long periods of time. ***It is not the environment that is primarily responsible for the spread of the virus, but contact between people.*** As the quantity of viable and infectious viruses on surfaces is rapidly decreasing, the recommendations are as follows:

1. Provisions brought into the home

Wash your hands after unpacking and discarding packaging of the days's grocery.

2. Housing surfaces handled often and by everyone (door handles...)

Disinfect daily with wipes impregnated with 70% alcohol or diluted bleach (one part bleach to nine parts water).

3. Mobile phones, remote controls, computer keyboards and mice

These objects, handled very frequently, can be disinfected with wipes impregnated with 70% alcohol (do not use a hydro-alcoholic solution containing hydrogen peroxide and glycerine, or bleach).

4. Food

Although there is no argument to suggest that food is a route of transmission of SARS-CoV-2, it is prudent to wash fruits and vegetables unless they are cooked;

5. Pets

No current data has identified pets as potential vectors of SARS-CoV-2 to humans (see Academy Press Release "Pets and Covid-19" put online on March 24).

All these measures should be explained to school-aged children.