

The Public Health Agency of Sweden

[The Public Health Agency of Sweden](#) → [Communicable Disease Control](#) → [COVID-19](#)
→ Recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19

From 14 December, more stringent national regulations and general guidelines will apply regarding everybody's responsibility in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Everyone in society, individuals as well as employers, has a duty to take measures to prevent the spread of infection.

UNDERLYING CONTENT

[Checklist for event organisers and venues serving food and drink](#)

Read more

[The Public Health Agency of Sweden's regulations and general guidelines relating to everyone's responsibility to prevent COVID-19 infections](#)

Socialise only with a small circle

The risk of contracting COVID-19, and spreading the infection further, increases the more people you mix with. It is therefore important to limit the number of encounters and maintain social distance. It is important to be aware of disease symptoms and to be prepared to cancel arrangements with other people to avoid the risk of spreading the virus.

Preferably, interact with each other in smaller circles, so you limit the number of people you are in close contact with as much as possible. The fewer people who come together, the better it is. You should also avoid taking part in several different groups.

If you meet people outside your immediate circle, you should take precautions that reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Get together outdoors if possible and maintain as much distance as possible and avoid being close to each other, especially in smaller spaces for a long time.

What is considered a small circle?

A small circle consists of a few people, but it is not possible to say an exact figure of how many. Who and how many are included in the circle may vary depending on the life situation of the individual. For someone it could mean a few close friends, for someone else the closest family.

Meet people in at-risk groups in a safe manner

Older people and people belonging to an at-risk group have a much greater risk of becoming seriously ill. It is therefore important that people in an at-risk group as well as people around them ensure that they meet in a safe manner. Here, too, it is important to limit the number of interactions, keep a safe distance, follow the hygiene guidelines and ensure that those with even slight symptoms refrain from meeting others. Visits to care homes for older people are allowed as long as no ban has been imposed. The visits should be done in a safe manner and in accordance with the housing's visitor procedures. Check with the operator or your municipality regarding applicable guidelines.

If you have had COVID-19, it is likely that you are at a lower risk of becoming infected and infecting others for a certain period after having had the infection. However, if you had COVID-19 this autumn, the risks are likely lower. Nevertheless, it is important to follow the guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Sweden to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

Travel safely

Try to limit your use of public transportation as much as possible. Transport does not in itself contribute to the spread of the virus, but there is a risk through encounters during the journey and at the destination.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden recommends that consideration be given to whether a trip to, for example, the big cities, mountain resorts or a resort where many people gather in the same place is necessary. You should not meet anyone outside your small circle, either in your home town or at your destination.

[Any travel should be made in a safe manner](#), from an infection control perspective. You should preferably choose a means of transport on which you can reserve a seat, e.g. a train. Do not travel if you have symptoms.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 at your destination, you should get tested, isolate yourself or make your way home in a safe manner to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

If you are celebrating Christmas or another holiday with relatives or friends in a location other than your home town, it should be in a small circle. You should not meet with people outside that circle during the holidays, regardless of whether you are at home or away visiting.

Avoid crowds when shopping

Both individuals and businesses have a responsibility to limit the spread of COVID-19. Aim to minimise your visits to stores. Shop on your own, avoid shopping at times when a lot of people go shopping and do not prolong your stay at the premises of shops and shopping centres beyond necessity. Make sure to follow guidelines and instructions of shops and delivery points.

Sport

The Government has recommended that all non-essential regional and municipal activities should remain closed until 7 March. This does not, however, include sporting, cultural and leisure activities for children and young people born in 2002 or later, either indoors or outdoors. Exercise is important to people's health and should be a prioritised activity during the pandemic, especially for children and young people. Considering the lower infection risk outdoors and the importance of exercise to public health, the Public Health Agency of Sweden has judged that outdoor exercise can continue according to the [Public Health Agency's regulations and general guidelines \(HSLF-FS 2020:12\) on everyone's responsibility to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#). Exercise may be carried out at public facilities provided the facility can be kept open to staff and visitors in a way that prevents the spread of infection. Children and young people born in 2002 or later can therefore also exercise indoors. The decision to keep sports facilities open is made at a regional or local level, based on the extent of the spread of COVID-19 and on an assessment by the person responsible for the activity.

Children and young people

Children in preschool, preschool class, compulsory school and corresponding schooling

It is the responsibility of adults to show and explain to children what they can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Festivities, other gatherings with many people, or meeting up in new groups are inappropriate. However, playing in smaller groups even outside the school or preschool is allowed, provided that everyone is healthy.

Cultural and leisure activities for children up to and including upper secondary school age may continue, on the condition that they do so in accordance with [regulations and general advice on everyone's responsibility to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#).

Young people of upper secondary school age

Many young people have a strong need to meet with friends. However, young people are expected to follow the general guidelines just like adults. This means limiting new

close contacts, socialising within a small circle, staying at home in case of symptoms of COVID-19 as well as keeping distance from others and avoiding environments with crowds. They should also wash hands frequently and thoroughly, or use hand sanitiser, as well as travel in a way that minimises the risk of infection. It is therefore important that adults provide guidance regarding these general guidelines on curbing the spread of infection.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden currently recommends that secondary school teaching be carried out in the form of remote or distance learning.

Loneliness

At the moment, it is essential to avoid meeting many different people and to avoid social settings where many people are gathering at the same time. This can make you feel more lonely than usual. At the same time, close relationships and encounters in everyday life are important to feel good.

We are all different. Some people appreciate being for themselves. Others may feel lonely, regardless of whether they live alone or are surrounded by friends and family. This in turn can create feelings of both stress and anxiety.

Try to find solutions that suit you. If you meet people other than those in your immediate circle, you should avoid being close to each other and primarily socialise outdoors. Make sure you follow the recommendations of the authorities to reduce the risk of disease and spread of the virus. You can take advantage of digital alternatives or the telephone to keep in touch. If you know someone you think might feel lonely, a call, a letter or a message can go a long way towards making a big difference.

If you feel lonely or want to assist someone else, there are tips and support available through [help lines and hotlines \(1177\)](#).

Local recommendations

Infection control doctors can issue local and regional recommendations. The website [Krisinformation.se](#) has a summary of information about recommendations in different regions.

Find out more: [About COVID -19 in different languages](#)

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About the website

The Public Health Agency of Sweden is an expert authority with responsibility for public health issues at a national level. The Agency develops and supports activities to promote health, prevent illness and improve preparedness for health threats. Our vision statement: a public health that strengthens the positive development of society.