

# Coronavirus: Virologist believes that infection through surface contact is unlikely

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Source:

University Hospital Bonn, North Rhine-Westphalia, Coronavirus Research Project COVID-19 in collaboration with the Institute of Virology at the University Hospital Bonn (published March 27, 2020), [ukbnewsroom.de](https://www.ukbnewsroom.de)

April 7, 2020

The text is drawn up in accordance with scientific standards and checked by medical professionals\*

\*This text complies with published medical articles, guidelines, and research results and has been checked by medical professionals.

## What is the risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) by way of contact with surfaces?

Controversial opinions concerning the risk of infection with the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19) by way of contact with infected surfaces currently exist. Some laboratory studies have shown that the virus can survive on certain surfaces. But does the same thing happen in real-world conditions? Based on his research, virologist Professor Hendrik Streeck believes that the risk of infection by way of surface contact is extremely low .

Professor Hendrick Streeck, together with Professor Dr. Christian Drosten, is currently perhaps the most famous virologist in Germany. A young lead researcher has taken over Drosten as director of the Institute of Virology at the University Hospital in Bonn. He and his team use a slightly different approach to work. While many virologists mainly work in laboratories, the Streeck team collects data in the vicinity of Heinsberg, which is a high-risk area. And they have already received important unexpected results.

## Has the risk of infection through surface contact been overestimated?

It has now been scientifically proven that SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) can be spread by airborne droplets. Small droplets of fluid breathed out by a person during coughing, sneezing and talking can contain pathogens. The virus can be transmitted from one person to another by way of these microdrops. Warnings about the danger of getting the virus by way of infected surfaces, such as doorknobs, have sounded in recent weeks. But there is currently no reliable data on the risk of infection through surface contact.

## **The virology research team works at the epicenter**

Researchers led by Professor Streeck started working here to find out how the virus behaves in vivo - where it is most abundant in Germany: in Gangelt, in the Heinsberg area. A scientific group of 40 people conduct surveys of patients among local residents. In addition, various data are collected right on the place and samples are taken.

## **The measures taken should be rethought and reasonably justified**

"There are many people in the Heinsberg area who became infected with the coronavirus earlier than anywhere else in Germany," explains Armin Laschet, the Prime Minister of North Rhine Westfalia, in a press release issued in connection with the launch of the virus research project. Conclusions important for controlling the virus throughout Germany can be obtained here. The Heinsberg district can serve as a testing ground, and an example where you can determine what measures should be taken to optimally secure the population from the virus. At the same time, this study will determinate which of the measures taken really make sense from the virological and epidemiological points of view, says Mr. Lachet.

The research project began on Monday, March 30, 2020, and will last four weeks. The study is funded by the government of North Rhine-Westphalia. The project caused a sensation when Professor Streeck spoke at [the Marcus Lanz talk show on March 31, 2020](#). The virologist gave his assessment of the various risks of infection with the virus.

## **The main result: scientists did not find live viruses on any surface**

Professor Streeck also reported on preliminary studies conducted in Heinsberg. Smears were taken from various objects in the homes of infected people. Surfaces of common objects, including doorknobs, mobile phones, toilets and sinks have been inspected. Then the smears were examined in the laboratory. Traces of the virus were discovered, but it was only the dead, non-hazardous genetic material of the virus - its RNA. "We investigated the living quarters,

where many people with acute infections lived, and yet we did not find a living virus on any surface,” says Professor Streck. These and other findings will now be refined and verified in ongoing research..

## **Other experts agree with the preliminary findings of the researchers**

Dr. Streck's colleague - Professor Christian Droosten, noted that coronaviruses are extremely susceptible to drying out while on the North German Broadcasting Company's (NDR) podcast. He also concluded that the carry-over of the virus to humans by way of contact with surfaces is unlikely, if any, to occur. However, there has not yet been official confirmation of these findings by the University Hospital Bonn. More detailed results of the Heinsberg study will be published in the coming weeks.

See also: [Coronavirus transmission: a study on Germany patients provides comprehensive information.](#)

### **Important Note:**

This article contains general information only and should not be used for self-diagnosis or treatment. If you think you are sick, see a doctor immediately.