

COVID19 HARM REDUCTION GUIDE FOR SEX WORKERS



**NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION**

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Bay Area Worker Support (BAWS) is a peer-run sex worker organization.

We provide support to Bay Area sex workers through mutual aid programming, community resource organizing, and information sharing. www.bayareaworkersupport.org

This guide was created to increase COVID-19 information for folks in the sex trade as we navigate working during the pandemic.

This document was created by active sex workers and local medical students at University of California San Francisco, and endorsed by local public health professionals from the Public Health Justice Collective and the National Harm Reduction Coalition.

This guide is designed for all folks in the sex trade: Indoor and outdoor FSSW, online content creators, pro-Dommes, strippers, and more, with most of our info pertaining to in-person workers.

Disclaimer: This is not medical advice.

However, the medical students who contributed to these guidelines have a background in medical knowledge and research interpretation.

The medical students have carefully selected information from credible sources and research studies to share with a broader audience.

Due to COVID-19 being relatively new, most research is still at early stages with different levels of scientific evidence. This is a living document that will be updated as new information comes in.

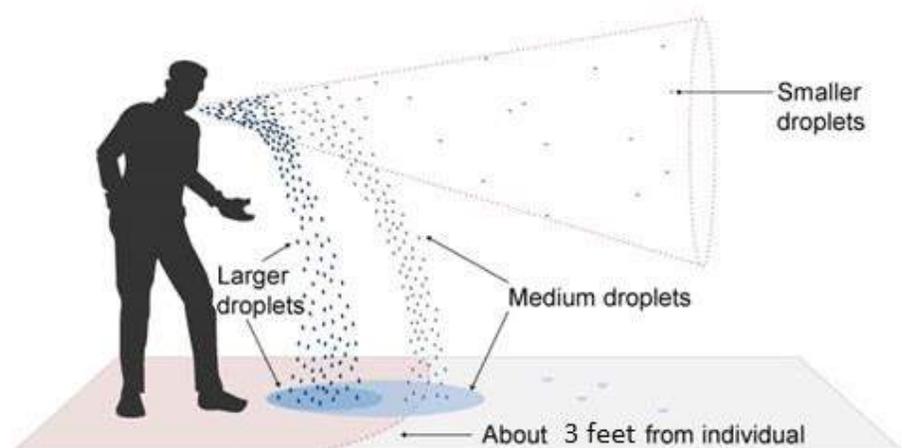


HOW DOES INFECTION WORK?

It takes as few as 1,000 viral particles to cause infection.

Not every droplet necessarily contains viral particles:

- 👤 A person's viral load changes at different times of infection -- how many particles are in someone's droplets, which affects how contagious they are, changes at different times of illness
- 👤 A single breath releases 50-5,000 droplets (increased when breathing more forcefully)
- 👤 Speaking increases the number of droplets
- 👤 A single cough releases about 3,000 droplets up to 50mph
- 👤 A single sneeze releases up to 30,000 droplets up to 200mph
- 👤 The longer you are exposed to an infected person's particles, the more likely you will contract the virus



Source: Elsevier, Credit: Jlanjilan Wai, Yuguo LI. GAO-20-545SP

FLUIDS

Which fluids transmit Coronavirus?

Fluids from our noses and mouths, like saliva, snot, and breath particles are the most common way Coronavirus is transmitted.

Coronavirus has also been found in urine, semen, and feces (**not vaginal fluid, at least so far!**) but the jury is still out on whether these fluids can actually transmit the virus.

Transmission through urine, semen and feces would be far less common than respiratory droplets.

-  **SALIVA**
-  **SNOT**
-  **URINE**
-  **SEMEN**
-  **FECES**



SURFACES

What precautions should be taken around surfaces?

Although Coronavirus can survive for several days in a lab, in the real world it usually only survives on surfaces for **6-12 hours**.

To get infected from a surface, you would have to touch the surface and then touch your face.

Bottom line:

Although it is possible to get COVID from surfaces, it is not one of the more common ways of contracting the virus.



How to reduce risk:

- 👠 Clean sex toys when switching from using on one partner to another.
- 👠 Dedicate one toy/prop to one person/one body part.
- 👠 Wipe down high-touch surfaces in rooms and cars such as door knobs, light switches, handles, etc. between use.
- 👠 Low-touch surfaces, such as couches, may not need to be wiped down regularly if given at least **6-12 hours** between use.
- 👠 Wash & sanitize your hands before and after work.

Does ventilating a room help?

Generally, **yes**.

- 👠 Increased air flow helps “dilute” viral particles in the air, resulting in lower COVID risk.
- 👠 Opening two windows on opposite sides of a room to allow air flow can help.
- 👠 Being outdoors is best because viral particles get diluted and sunlight helps neutralize COVID particles faster.
- 👠 Some studies have shown that high-power fans may actually accelerate the movement of viral droplets and can cause infection of people further away.



Gloves

The virus cannot enter the skin of your hand, but it can sit on the surface of gloves in the same way it can sit on the surface of your skin.

Handwashing and not touching your face are more important than using gloves.

How long should I wait in-between clients?

It depends on the air flow through the room. COVID is estimated to stay in the air about **30 minutes**, but better air flow disperses the virus better and reduces this time.

STRIPPING & DANCING

Does staying far apart from clients decrease risk even if it's indoors?

Yes, physical distancing from others indoors is one of the best ways to protect yourself.

Coronavirus is mainly transmitted through “droplets” which are weighed down by gravity once they leave someone’s nose or mouth.

Most droplets remain in the air for only a short time before falling to the ground within 6 feet of the source.

Less commonly, coronavirus is also capable of “aerosolized” transmission, where smaller droplets are capable of traveling distances greater than 6 feet to infect others.

UV and Hepa filters can also greatly help in indoor spaces.

Bottom line:

If indoors, the more space between individuals the better, ideally **more than 6 feet** if possible.

The more people wearing a mask, the better.

CARS

Working in cars:

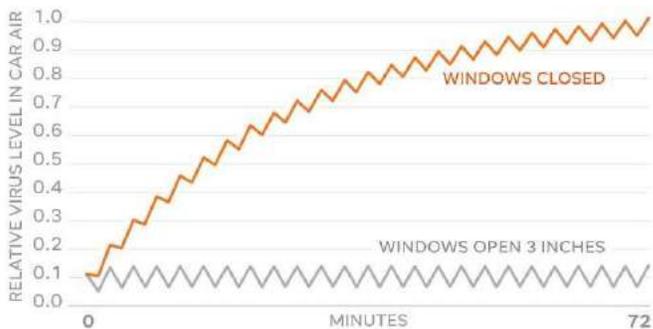
Working in cars can be higher-risk because they are small spaces with little air flow.

Ways to improve airflow:

- 👉 Open or crack windows
- 👉 Turning on the air conditioning vents
- 👉 Use sunlight to help reduce viral loads.

Coronavirus accumulation in cars

Riding in a car for 72 minutes with an infected passenger, the SARS-CoV-2 virus, in fine aerosol particles, builds up if windows are closed. Keeping one window open just 3 inches can keep the accumulation at bay. The jagged nature of each curve corresponds to a cough every 3 minutes. Values are relative to the peak virus level when windows are closed.



SOURCE Joseph Allen, assistant professor and director of the Healthy Buildings program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and co-author of "Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity;" Jack Spengler, professor at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and director of the JPB Environmental Health Fellows Program; Richard Corsi, dean of Portland State University's Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science



What about body worship?

It depends on the activity.

If the worship is done as far from the mouth and nose as possible (ex. toes) that's less risky than body worship that involves saliva or other bodily fluids.

Dry > Wet

KISSING

Are there ways to make kissing safer?

Coronavirus is most commonly spread through saliva and droplets from our noses and mouths, so transmission risk from mouth-to-mouth kissing is high.

Bottom line: There is no low-risk form of kissing.

How to reduce risk from kissing:

- 👠 Kiss everywhere but the face (the further from the face, the safer)
- 👠 Reduce duration of time spent kissing.
- 👠 Minimize touching one another's faces while kissing.
- 👠 Keep breathing slow and minimize panting and vocalizing.



SEX PT. 1

Are there certain sexual positions that can limit the amount of exposure between partners?

Yes. If there are barriers or distance between one person's mouth and nose and another person's mouth and nose, the risk of transmission is decreased.

Bottom line: Keeping your face farther away from their face and using barriers lower the risk.

For example, wearing masks or using a glory-hole provides a barrier between partners.

Overall risk depends on how likely someone is to have COVID and how much time/droplets you share with them.

For example, sex between people who have been in **strict self-isolation for three weeks = lower risk.**

However, sex with someone who has COVID, even with both parties wearing masks, would be a higher risk activity.

People may have Coronavirus but be asymptomatic, so it's hard to know if someone is high or low-risk.

SEX PT. 2

How to reduce risk associated with sex:

- 👉 **Wash up** with soap and water before engaging in sexual activity.
- 👉 **For oral sex, have the receiving partner wear a mask.** Make sure their nose is covered and the mask is sealed as best as possible.
- 👉 **Reduce panting/vocalizing.**
- 👉 **Use barrier methods** such as condoms or dental dams, to minimize contact between body fluids and someone's nose and mouth.
- 👉 **Minimize touching** your client's eyes, nose, mouth, or face with unwashed hands.
- 👉 **Minimize using saliva** for lubrication.



TESTING

Knowing your status is powerful information to have, but remember that testing only gives you a snapshot of where you are at the moment of testing.

Ideally, you are able to quarantine for 10 days before testing to reduce the chance of transmission.

In addition to testing, we encourage folks to have conversations with your clients or content collaborators about recent risk exposures, and living situations and work activity when possible.

If you have had a high-risk exposure - for example, you discovered a client recently had COVID or you were in close contact with someone symptomatic - it is recommended to **quarantine for 10 days** regardless of your test results or symptoms, and quarantine for two weeks and seek medical care if you develop symptoms.

Waiting at least five days from the exposure will decrease the chances that a test will be a false negative.

But, a negative test doesn't mean that you should start seeing clients/stop quarantining if you have truly had a high risk exposure.

Here is a link to a PDF from the CDC on what to do while waiting for results.

BE AWARE:

- 👉 **Testing is not a fail-safe guarantee.** Test results can be inaccurate, and it is possible to contract the virus in the days between getting tested and receiving results.
- 👉 **Sex workers in our community have reported clients photoshopping COVID test results.**



BAY AREA TESTING SITES

In Oakland:

- 👤 **Roots** <https://rootsclinic.org/covid-19-testing/>
- 👤 **Osita** <https://ositahealthclinic.com/>
- 👤 **City Health OAK Airport** <https://norcalcovid19testing.com/>



This site only offers drive through testing.

- 👤 **LIH- Logistics Health Incorporated** <https://lhi.care/covidtesting>
- 👤 **Fulgent Genetics** <https://www.fulgentgenetics.com/covid19/community>
- 👤 **Homies Empowerment** <https://twitter.com/homiesempower>
- 👤 **Pixel.labcorp.com**
<https://www.pixel.labcorp.com/at-home-test-kits/covid-19-test-home-collection-kit>

Free at home nasal swab

- 👤 **One Medical Tent** <https://www.onemedical.com/locations/>
Broadway and 11th
- 👤 **Project Baseline** <https://www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19/>
- 👤 **Color testing sites** <https://www.color.com/community-test-sites>

There is a pre-appointment online questionnaire, and photo ID is requested at the appointment, but neither are required to be checked at the testing site during appointment. Vehicle and walk up.

In San Francisco:

In the options listed in **this link**, there are two main city-run sites that are available for free testing to the general public, whether you have insurance or not.

- 👤 **Color Testing SF** <https://www.color.com/community-test-sites>

Usually appointments are only available about 2 weeks in advance, but results turnaround time is pretty fast.

CONTRIBUTORS

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National Harm Reduction Coalition

<https://harmreduction.org/>

Public Health Justice Collective

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/publichealthjusticecollective>

