What we know about COVID-19 and mink

THE LATEST ON THE COVID-19 GLOBAL SITUATION & SARS-CoV-2 IN MINK
Overview

- **Update on the global situation**
- **Mink and SARS-CoV-2**
- **Resources**
- **How to protect ourselves and others**
- **Upcoming events**

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Current global situation

As of 15 November 2020, 10:00AM CEST

- Nearly 53 million cases
- 5 countries with highest cumulative number of cases
  - United States of America
  - India
  - Brazil
  - Russian Federation
  - France

- > 1.3 million deaths
- 5 countries with highest cumulative number of deaths
  - United States of America
  - Brazil
  - India
  - Mexico
  - The United Kingdom
Current global situation
Cases reported to WHO as of 15 November 2020, 10:00AM CEST

* Cases depicted by bars; deaths depicted by line
Distribution of first 50 million cases by WHO region

Data as of 09 November 2020, 10:00AM CEST

- Americas: 21,696,657 cases (43%)
- Europe: 13,383,292 cases (27%)
- South-East Asia: 9,697,585 cases (19%)
- Eastern Mediterranean: 3,337,885 cases (7%)
- Africa: 1,362,566 cases (3%)
- Western Pacific: 769,795 cases (2%)
COVID-19 cases reported in the last 7 days
Per million population

FROM 09 NOVEMBER 2020, 10:00AM CEST to 15 NOVEMBER 2020, 10:00 AM CEST
COVID-19 deaths reported in the last 7 days
Per million population

FROM 02 NOVEMBER 2020, 10:00 AM CEST to 08 NOVEMBER 2020, 10:00 AM CEST
Human-animal interface of SARS-CoV-2 transmission

- SARS-CoV-2 spreads primarily through human-to-human transmission
- Transmission between humans and certain animals has been observed
- Animals such as mink, dogs, domestic cats, lions, tigers and raccoon dogs in contact with infected humans have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2
Mink and SARS-CoV-2

- Each year, more than 50 million mink are bred for their fur worldwide
- Mink are susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 and like humans, can show a range of symptoms, from no signs of illness at all to severe problems, such as pneumonia
SARS-CoV-2 in farmed mink

• SARS-CoV-2 in mink has been reported on fur farms in the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, Italy and the United States

• Mink kept in large numbers on mink farms have caught the virus from infected workers

• In a small number of cases, the virus has ‘spilled back’ from mink to humans

• It is normal for viruses to mutate or change over time. However, when a virus moves from humans to animal populations such as mink, and back to humans, it can acquire unique mutations
Mink SARS-CoV-2 in people: Denmark

• Since June 2020, 326 human cases of COVID-19 were identified in Denmark to have SARS-CoV-2 variants associated with farmed mink

• On 5 November, a cluster of 12 human cases with a unique variant, so-called ‘cluster 5’ was reported

Cluster 5 variant and implications for vaccine development

- The mink-associated ‘cluster 5’ strain involves mutations to the gene for the spike protein of the virus.
- The spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 is targeted by some vaccines currently being developed and mutations of the spike protein are therefore closely watched.
- At present, the implications of the identified changes in the ‘cluster 5’ variant are not well understood and are being investigated.
Reducing the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 between humans and farmed animals

- It is important to:
  - Ensure infection prevention and control measures are in place on farms
  - Strengthen farming biosafety and biosecurity measures around known animal reservoirs
  - Ensure strong surveillance, sampling and sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 (especially around areas where such animal reservoirs are identified)
The WHO response to better understand implications of the SARS-CoV-2 cluster 5 mutation

• WHO SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution Working Group is working with Danish scientists to better understand the cluster 5 mutation and collaborate on further investigations.

• Further scientific and laboratory-based studies are underway to understand the implications of this variant in terms of SARS-CoV-2 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. These investigations are carried out in close collaboration between WHO and different research groups.

• WHO is working with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to provide guidance on the current situation in Denmark and in other countries with mink farms.
Monitoring social media on SARS-CoV-2 and mink

5 November – 11 November 2020

An increase of activity on social media and search engines suggests there is an interest in the topic of SARS-CoV-2 and mink

**TWITTER**

[...] should we be worried about mink covid?

1.51K engagements
( likes, comments, re-tweets or other )

**GOOGLE**

Covid mink mutation

+5,000% increase
( compared to previous week )
Resources

• **Facebook live, 4 November**
  Watch as experts from WHO/Europe answer your questions on COVID-19

• **Disease Outbreak News, 6 November**
  SARS-CoV-2 mink-associated variant strain – Denmark

• **WHO/Europe news ‘Mink strain of COVID-19 in Denmark’, 7 November**
  Denmark reported 12 human cases of COVID-19 caused by a specific mink-associated variant strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus
How to protect ourselves & others
9 important COVID-19 prevention measures

01 Stay home and self-isolate if you feel unwell, even with mild symptoms
02 Clean hands frequently with soap & water for 40 seconds or with alcohol-based hand rub
03 Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze

04 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
05 Maintain a minimum physical distance of at least 1 metre from others
06 Stay away from crowds and avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces

07 Use a fabric mask where physical distancing of at least 1 metre is not possible
08 Use a medical / surgical mask if you may be at higher risk (age, medical conditions)
09 Regularly clean & disinfect frequently touched surfaces
WHO guidance on COVID-19

VIDEO RESOURCES

Masks

Medical and fabric masks: who wears what when?

How to wear a fabric mask safely

How to wear a fabric mask

How to wear a medical mask

Transmission

How to break the chains of transmission

Protecting ourselves

How to protect yourself against COVID-19

Seven steps to prevent the spread of the virus
Call for poster submissions

Third WHO Conference on Infodemic Management – A whole-of-society approach

30 Nov – 11 Dec 2020

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:
20 November 2020

Submit your digital poster about country experience in mitigating the COVID-19 infodemic.

Selected posters will be accepted and summarized as part of the conference proceedings.

Sharing your country’s experience in infodemic management can help improve other countries’ strategies.


FIND OUT MORE