



Portuguese Association of Water and Wastewater Services
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Leaflet Brochure: COVID-19

Severe acute respiratory syndrome - coronavirus 2, in drinking water

Can COVID-19 be transmitted through drinking water?

There is no evidence that the virus responsible for COVID-19 can be transmitted through drinking water. The current evidence is that the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus spreads through droplets released by the nose or mouth when we cough, sneeze or speak, which can directly reach the mouth, nose, and eyes of those close to us. Droplets can remain on objects or surfaces that surround the infected person. Therefore, other people can become infected by touching these objects or surfaces and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with their hands. In Portugal, the safe water indicator is around 99%, and the population can be sure that they can drink tap water with confidence.

Should I buy bottled water?

It is not necessary to buy bottled water to drink. Tap water will continue to be safely available to all its consumers.

How are the Drinking and Wastewater Operators protecting the water supply?

Drinking and Wastewater Operators have strict hygiene measures in water treatment plants. Existing water treatment and disinfection processes, including the use of chlorine, are effective in removing viruses from water. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), for adequate disinfection, there should be a residual concentration of free chlorine of ≥ 0.5 mg/l after at least 30 minutes of contact time at $\text{pH} < 8.0$. A chlorine residual should remain throughout the distribution system. Drinking and Wastewater Operators are in contact with their health authorities to monitor and understand the virus and its impact on human health, as more information about it becomes available.

And if Drinking and Wastewater Operators workers are in quarantine at home, will water still be provided?

Water is an essential service, and Drinking and Wastewater Operators have Contingency Plans to prepare the response and minimize the impact of COVID-19. Additionally, the Drinking and Wastewater Operators have communication plans for emergencies in the quality of water for human consumption and continue to update them in response to the most current information available. In general, water treatment plants are safe, have backup power, and require few employees to operate them. Some can even work remotely.

How to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus?

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Portuguese Directorate-General for Health (DGS) recommend measures of hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce exposure and transmission of the disease.

- 1) Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze (never with your hands).
- 2) Always dispose of the used tissue immediately.
- 3) Wash your hands frequently. You should wash them whenever you blow, sneeze, cough, or after direct contact with sick people.
- 4) Avoid close contact with people with a respiratory infection.

APDA

APDA is an organization that represents and defends the interests of the Portuguese entities responsible for water supply and wastewater services, as well as all stakeholders in this field. At the same time, encourages the treatment, research and development of issues related to the quantity and quality of water supply, drainage and the final destination of wastewater, providing a forum for professionals and experts from different backgrounds. The Specialized Committee for Water Quality (CEQA) explores issues related to water intended for human consumption, including all the processes that support this goal and the interconnection between various domains.

CEQA

Comissão Especializada de Qualidade da Água (Specialized Committee for Water Quality)