



Guidance

COVID-19: suggested principles of safer singing

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What we know about singing and COVID-19

We have evidence that:

- several outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID-19) have been associated with adult choir rehearsals and performances and in church congregations across the world
- singing by adults produces both large droplets of respiratory secretions that generally fall onto surfaces within 2 metres of the singer, and small droplets that are carried on the air for some distance (aerosols)
- singing and speaking at a similar level of loudness produce similar masses of aerosol
- shouting or singing loudly can produce 20-times the mass of aerosol than speaking at a normal level of loudness
- children, like adults, produce a far greater mass of aerosol when they shout or sing loudly
- some adults produce a much greater mass of aerosol than others when speaking or singing at a similar level of loudness ('super-emitters')
- wearing face coverings reduces the mass of aerosol expelled when singing
- laboratory data suggest that the virus can remain infectious for timescales longer than the usual duration of rehearsals or concerts, once released into the air
- ventilation is a useful way of removing aerosol and minimising its concentration in the air
- the probability of infectious virus shedding – and hence the risk of transmission – increases with the number of people who sing at an event
- the risk of onward transmission increases with the number of people who attend an event and its duration

We do not have evidence for:

- the relative importance of the different routes by which people at singing events became infected (from contaminated surfaces, from large droplets, or from aerosols)
- whether choir-related outbreaks are the result of a single source super-spreading event or multiple infectious individuals
- how much virus is contained within aerosol droplets
- how to identify super-emitters
- the degree to which wearing face coverings during singing reduces transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19

Suggested principles of safer singing

Taking account of the evidence, and if other national and local guidance on the control of COVID-19 is followed, singing is considered safer when the following actions are taken:

1. As required by national guidance, people with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, or who are known to have been in recent contact with others who have COVID-19, do not participate in singing or attend singing events.
2. Singing takes place only in larger well-ventilated spaces, or outdoors.
3. Performance or rehearsal is for limited periods of time at a reduced level of loudness, using microphones for amplification if available.
4. Limited numbers of people sing together.
5. Singers are spaced at least 2 metres apart in all directions (at least 1 metre apart if the additional measures or controls recommended in government [COVID-19 guidance for the performing arts](#) are applied).

Additional precautionary actions

Based on the evidence available to us now, it is not possible to be certain that wearing a face covering whilst singing reduces the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. However, since face coverings have been shown to reduce the mass of aerosol expelled during singing, their use might be considered as additional precautionary mitigation, where this is practicable.

Detailed [guidance and COVID-19 advice](#) is available.

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