Viruses and infectious period

Cold and flu virus-laden droplets may remain infectious for several hours, depending on where they fall. **Viruses generally remain active longer on stainless steel, plastic and similar hard surfaces then on fabric and other soft surfaces.** Other factors, such as the amount of virus deposited on a surface and the temperature and humidity of the environment, also determine how long cold and flu viruses stay active outside the body.

COVID-19	**METAL: 5 days** • Examples: doorknobs, jewelry, silverware **WOOD: 4 days** • Examples: furniture, decking **PLASTICS: 2 to 3 days** • Examples: packaging, bus seats, elevator buttons **STAINLESS STEEL: 2 to 3 days** • Examples: refrigerators, pots, pans, sinks **CARDBOARD: 24 hours** • Examples: shipping boxes **COPPER: 4 hours** • Examples: pennies, teakettles, cookware **ALUMINUM: 2 to 8 hours** • Examples: soda cans, tinfoil, water bottles **GLASS: up to 5 days** • Examples: drinking glasses, measuring cups, windows, mirrors **CERAMICS: 5 days** • Examples: dishes, pottery, mugs **PAPER: few minutes to 5 days**
Seasonal Flu	**24 to 48 hours**
Cold Virus	**Up to 7 days**
Salmonella Bacteria	**Up to 4 hours on dry surfaces**
Hepatitis A Virus	**Up to 4 hours on hands, Several days on surfaces indoors**

Hepatitis B Virus	**Can survive outside body at least 7 days**
Hepatitis C Virus	**Can remain infectious for up to 6 weeks on surfaces at room temperature**
E-coli bacteria	**Few hours to a day**

What Are Germs?
The term "germs" refers to the microscopic bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa that can cause disease.

Bacteria
Bacteria (bak-TEER-ee-uh) are tiny, single-celled organisms that get nutrients from their environments.

Viruses
Viruses are even smaller than bacteria. They aren't even a full cell. They are simply genetic material (DNA or RNA) packaged inside of a protein coating. They need to use another cell's structures to reproduce. This means they can't survive unless they're living inside something else (such as a person, animal, or plant). Viruses can only live for a very short time outside other living cells. For example, viruses in infected body fluids left on surfaces like a doorknob or toilet seat can live there for a short time. They'll die quickly unless a live host comes along.

Fungi
Fungi (FUN-guy) are multicelled, plant-like organisms. A fungus gets nutrition from plants, food, and animals in damp, warm environments. Many fungal infections, such as athlete's foot and yeast infections, are not dangerous in a healthy person. People with weak immune systems (from diseases like HIV or cancer), though, may get more serious fungal infections.

Protozoa
Protozoa (pro-toe-ZO-uh) are one-celled organisms, like bacteria. But they are bigger than bacteria and contain a nucleus and other cell structures, making them more like plant and animal cells. Protozoa love moisture. So intestinal infections and other diseases they cause, like amebiasis and giardiasis, often spread through contaminated water. Some protozoa are parasites. This means they need to live on or in another organism (like an animal or plant) to survive. For example, the protozoa that causes malaria grows inside red blood cells, eventually destroying them. Some protozoa are encapsulated in cysts, which help them live outside the human body and in harsh environments for long periods of time.