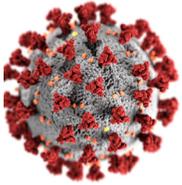


What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others



Know about COVID-19

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.



Know how COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.



Know your risk for severe illness

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

10 things you can do to manage your COVID-19 symptoms at home

Accessible Version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

If you have possible or confirmed COVID-19:

1. **Stay home** from work and school. And stay away from other public places. If you must go out, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.



6. **Cover your cough and sneezes.**



2. **Monitor your symptoms** carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.



7. **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



3. **Get rest and stay hydrated.**



8. As much as possible, **stay** in a specific room and **away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.



4. If you have a medical appointment, **call the healthcare provider** ahead of time and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.



9. **Avoid sharing personal items** with other people in your household, like dishes, towels, and bedding.



5. For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel** that you have or may have COVID-19.



10. **Clean all surfaces** that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have COVID-19, follow the steps below to care for yourself and to help protect other people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care.

- **Stay home.** Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and are able to recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- **Take care of yourself.** Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you have trouble breathing, or have any other emergency warning signs, or if you think it is an emergency.
- **Avoid public transportation,** ride-sharing, or taxis.



Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.

- **As much as possible, stay in a specific room** and away from other people and pets in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.
- See **COVID-19 and Animals if you have questions about pets:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#COVID19animals>
- Additional guidance is available for those **living in close quarters.** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-hj-ncov/daily-life-coping/living-in-close-quarters.html>) and **shared housing** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/shared-housing/index.html>).



Monitor your symptoms.

- **Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath but other symptoms may be present as well.**
- **Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department.** Your local health authorities will give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.



When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention

Look for **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately:**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Bluish lips or face
- Inability to wake or stay awake

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility:

Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor.

- **Call ahead.** Many medical visits for routine care are being postponed or done by phone or telemedicine.
- **If you have a medical appointment that cannot be postponed, call your doctor's office,** and tell them you have or may have COVID-19.



If you are sick, wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth.

- **You should wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth** if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home).
- You don't need to wear the cloth face covering if you are alone. If you can't put on a cloth face covering (because of trouble breathing for example), cover your coughs and sneezes in some other way. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from other people. This will help protect the people around you.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2 years, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is not able to remove the covering without help.



Note: During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical grade facemasks are reserved for healthcare workers and some first responders. You may need to make a cloth face covering using a scarf or bandana.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Throw used tissues** in a lined trash can.
- **Immediately wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Clean your hands often.

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Use hand sanitizer** if soap and water are not available. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Soap and water are the best option**, especially if your hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid sharing personal household items.

- **Do not share** dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.
- **Wash these items thoroughly after using them** with soap and water or put them in the dishwasher.



Clean all "high-touch" surfaces everyday.

- **Clean and disinfect** high-touch surfaces in your "sick room" and bathroom. Let someone else clean and disinfect surfaces in common areas, but not your bedroom and bathroom.
- **If a caregiver or other person needs to clean and disinfect** a sick person's bedroom or bathroom, they should do so on an as-needed basis. The caregiver/other person should wear a cloth face covering and wait as long as possible after the sick person has used the bathroom.



High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.

- **Clean and disinfect areas that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.**
- **Use household cleaners and disinfectants.** Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then use a household disinfectant.
 - Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for several minutes to ensure germs are killed. Many also recommend precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
 - Most EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

When you can be around others after you had or likely had COVID-19

When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations.



• I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms

- You can be with others after
 - 3 days with no fever**AND**
 - symptoms improved**AND**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared
- Depending on your healthcare provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you will be tested, you can be around others when you have no fever, symptoms have improved, and you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

• I tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

- If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after:
 - 10 days have passed since test
- Depending on your healthcare provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you will be tested, you can be around others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.
- If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for "I think or know I had COVID, and I had symptoms."

Know the Difference

Isolation vs. Quarantine

Isolation

For people who are ill

- Separates people who have a very contagious disease from those who are healthy.
- Restricts the movement of people who have a contagious disease to stop the spread of illness.
- Protects healthy people from getting a contagious disease.
- Lets people who have a contagious disease be cared for in their homes, hospitals or a designated facility.
- Is usually voluntary, but federal, state and local laws may require isolation of people who have a contagious disease to protect the public.



Quarantine

For people who have been exposed, but are not ill

- Applies to people who are not yet ill, but have been exposed to a very contagious disease that could be spread to others.
- Applies to the separation and restriction of movements of people.
- Is a public health strategy to stop the spread of a very contagious disease.
- Protects the public from very contagious diseases.



Social Distancing

One way to help stop the spread of a very contagious disease such as COVID-19 is to limit close contact of people with each other also known as social distancing. Social distancing can include:

- Work telecommuting
- School cancellations
- Cancellation of public gatherings
- Isolation of people who have a contagious disease
- Liberal work leave policies
- Quarantine of people exposed to contagious disease



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >

When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19

Updated July 16, 2020

[Print](#)

If you have or think you might have COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from other people. Staying away from others helps stop the spread of COVID-19. **If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing),** get emergency medical care immediately.



When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations.

Find CDC's recommendations for your situation below.

I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms

You can be with others after

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Symptoms have improved



Depending on your healthcare provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you are tested, you can be around others when you have no fever, respiratory symptoms have improved, and you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

I tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after:

- 10 days have passed since test



Depending on your healthcare provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you will be tested, you can be around others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for “I think or know I had COVID, and I had symptoms.”

I have a weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication. When can I be around others?

People with conditions that weaken their immune system might need to stay home longer than 10 days. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information. If testing is available in your community, it may be recommended by your healthcare provider. You can be with others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

If testing is not available in your area, your doctor should work with an infectious disease expert at your local health department to determine if you are likely to spread COVID-19 to others and need to stay home longer.

For Anyone Who Has Been Around a Person with COVID-19

It is important to remember that anyone who has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days **after exposure** based on the time it takes to develop illness.



For healthcare professionals

[Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)

I Think or Know I had COVID-19, and I had Symptoms. When can I be Around Others?

I Think or Know I had COVID-19, and I had Symptoms. When can I be Around Others?

If you have or think you might have COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from others. When you can be around others depends on different factors for different situations.

I Had COVID-19, But No Symptoms. When Can I Be with Others?

I Had COVID-19, But No Symptoms. When Can I Be with Others?

If you have or think you might have COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from others. When you can be around others depends on different factors for different situations.

More information

[What to Do If You Are Sick](#)

[Caring for Someone at Home](#)

[Quarantine and Isolation](#)

[Symptom-Based Strategy to Discontinue Isolation for Persons with COVID-19](#)

Last Updated July 16, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases