

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Protect Yourself



Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America: [15 Days to Slow the Spread](#)  

Know How it Spreads



- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Take steps to protect yourself



Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a **hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.



Avoid close contact

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for **people who are at higher risk of getting very sick**.

Take steps to protect others

Stay home if you're sick



- **Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).



Cover coughs and sneezes

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



Wear a facemask if you are sick

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. [Learn what to do if you are sick](#).
- **If you are NOT sick:** You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.



Clean and disinfect

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

To disinfect:

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

Options include:

- **Diluting your household bleach.**

To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
OR
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- **Alcohol solutions.**

Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol

ENSURE SOLUTION HAS AT LEAST 70% ALCOHOL.

- **Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants.**

Products with [EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens](#) [7 pages] claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).



[More handwashing tips](#)

[Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#)

More information

[Symptoms](#)

[Travelers](#)

[What to do if you are sick](#)

[Individuals, schools, events, businesses and more](#)

[If someone in your house gets sick](#)

[Healthcare Professionals](#)

[Frequently asked questions](#)

Page last reviewed: March 16, 2020

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Symptoms



Call your doctor: If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.

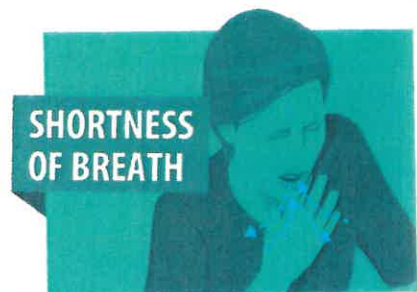
Watch for symptoms

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.*

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

*This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of **MERS-CoV** viruses.



If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.



How to protect yourself



What to do if you are sick

More information

Households

Caregivers

Schools

Businesses

People Who are Sick

Healthcare Professionals

Health Departments

Laboratories

Stop the spread of germs



Printable Flyer

- English [1 page]
- Spanish [1 page]

What to do if you are sick



Printable Flyer

- English [1 page]

Page last reviewed: March 16, 2020

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Testing for COVID-19



Call your doctor: If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.

If you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 or you are a resident in a community where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19 and develop [symptoms of COVID-19](#), call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure. They will decide whether you need to be tested, but keep in mind that there is no treatment for COVID-19 and people who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and care for themselves at home.

If you are at higher risk for serious illness

People at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild.

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

If you are very sick get medical attention immediately

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

For healthcare professionals

For information on testing for healthcare professionals, see recommendations for reporting, testing, and specimen collection at [Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#).

Page last reviewed: March 13, 2020