Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Coronavirus Disease 2019

# What to Do If You Are Sick

If you have a fever, cough or other symptoms, you might have COVID-19. Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home. If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

- Keep track of your symptoms.
- **If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing),** get medical attention right away.

Self-Checker

A guide to help you make decisions and seek appropriate medical care

## Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

**Follow the steps below:** 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 can 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

**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.

### Monitor your symptoms

- **Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough or other symptoms.** Trouble breathing is a more serious symptom that means you should get medical attention.
- **Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department.** Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

## When to Seek Medical Attention

If you have any of these **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately:**

- Trouble breathing
- 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 to you.

**Call 911 if you have a medical emergency:** Notify the operator that you have, or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

## 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. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.

## 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.

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

## Cover your coughs and sneezes

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Throw away 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 hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Handwashing Tips

## 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 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 mask 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. A full list of disinfectants can be found here .
    - Complete Disinfection Guidance

## When it’s safe to be around others: ending home isolation

### People with COVID-19 or its symptoms who:

- are recovering at home (or other non-hospital setting), and
- **will not be tested** to determine if they are no longer contagious

can leave their “sick room” and home when:

- They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever) without the use of medicine that reduces fevers
  AND
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved)
  AND

- At least 7 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared

### People with COVID-19 or its symptoms who:

- are recovering at home (or other non-hospital setting), and
- **will be tested** to determine if they are no longer contagious

can leave their "sick room" and home when:

- They no longer have a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
  AND
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved)
  AND
- They received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart

### People who **DID NOT** have **COVID-19 symptoms, but tested positive** who:

- are self-isolating at home (or other non-hospital setting)

can leave their "sick room" and home when:

- At least 7 days have passed since the date of the first positive test

AND

- They continue to have no symptoms (no cough or shortness of breath) since the test

For 3 more days, this group of people should continue to limit contact (stay 6 feet or more away from others) and wear a face covering for their nose and mouth when other people are present (including at home).

### For ALL people

- When leaving the home, **keep a distance of 6 feet from others** and **wear a** cloth face covering when around other people.

**Follow guidance provided by the healthcare provider and local health department.** The decision to stop home isolation will be made in consultation with their healthcare provider and state and local health departments. Local decisions depend on local circumstances.

Find more information on when to end home isolation.

**For any additional questions about your care,** contact your healthcare provider or state or local health department.

## For healthcare professionals

**There is no specific antiviral treatment** recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

- Evaluating and Testing Patients for COVID-19
- Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings
- Discontinuing Isolation Guidance