



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Caring for Yourself or Others

If you or a household member have symptoms of COVID-19, follow these guidelines for preventing spread of the virus and managing symptoms. This is regardless of your vaccination status.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms

- Stay home. Call your healthcare provider and tell them you have symptoms of COVID-19. Do this before going to any hospital or clinic. Follow your provider's instructions. You may be advised to isolate yourself at home. This is called self-isolation. You may also be told to stay at least 6 feet from others to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This is called "social distancing."
- Stay away from work, school, and public places. Limit physical contact with family members. Limit visitors. Don't kiss anyone or share eating or drinking utensils. Clean surfaces you touch with disinfectant. This is to help prevent the virus from spreading.
- If you need to cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue. Then throw the tissue into the trash. If you don't have tissues, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow.
- Wear a cloth face mask with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric and a nose wire while in public or when indoors with people who don't live with you. Or you can wear a disposable paper mask with a cloth mask on top. Wear the mask so that it covers both your nose and mouth.
- Don't share food or personal items with people in your household. This includes items like eating and drinking utensils, towels, and bedding.
- If you need to go to a hospital or clinic, expect that the healthcare staff will wear protective equipment such as masks, gowns, gloves, and eye protection. You may be advised to wait in or enter through a separate area. This is to prevent the possible virus from spreading.
- Tell the healthcare staff about recent travel. This includes local travel on public transport. Staff may need to find other people you have been in contact with.
- Follow all instructions the healthcare staff give you.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19

- Stay home and start self-isolation. Don't leave your home unless you need to get medical care. Don't go to work, school, or public areas. Don't use public transportation or taxis.

- Follow all instructions from your healthcare provider. Call your healthcare provider's office before going. They can prepare and give you instructions. This will help prevent the virus from spreading.
- If you need to go to a hospital or clinic, expect that the healthcare staff will wear protective equipment such as masks, gowns, gloves, and eye protection. You may be advised to wait in or enter through a separate area. This is to prevent the possible virus from spreading.
- Wear a face mask with 2 or more layers and a nose wire. Use either a cloth mask with layers of tightly woven, breathable fabric or a disposable paper mask with a cloth mask on top. This is to protect other people from your germs. If you are not able to wear a mask, your caregivers should. Wear the mask so that it covers both your nose and mouth.
- Stay away from other people in your home.
- Stay away from pets and other animals.
- Don't share food or personal items with people in your household. This includes items like eating and drinking utensils, towels, and bedding.
- If you need to cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue. Then throw the tissue into the trash. If you don't have tissues, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often.

Self-care at home

Prevention

The FDA has approved several vaccines to prevent COVID-19 or reduce its severity. These vaccines also reduce how severe the illness will be if you get the virus. No vaccine is ever 100% effective in preventing any illness, but the COVID-19 vaccines work well and are safe. One vaccine has been approved for people as young as 12. Expert groups, including ACOG and CDC, advise pregnant or breastfeeding people to be vaccinated. Talk with your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you and your family.

Treatment

Current treatment is mainly aimed at helping your body while it fights the virus. This is known as supportive care. For serious COVID-19, you may need to stay in the hospital. Supportive care includes:

- **Getting rest.** This helps your body fight the illness.
- **Staying hydrated.** Drinking liquids is the best way to prevent dehydration. Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquids every day, or as advised by your provider. Also check with your provider about which fluids are best for you. Don't drink fluids that contain caffeine or alcohol.
- **Taking over-the-counter (OTC) pain medicine.** These are used to help ease pain and reduce fever. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions for which OTC medicine to use.

If you've been treated for suspected or confirmed COVID-19, follow all of your healthcare team's instructions. This will include when it's OK to stop self-isolation. You may also get instructions on position changes to help your breathing, such as lying on your belly (prone positioning). If you were treated at a hospital and discharged, you may be sent home with a pulse oximeter. This is a small electronic device that you clip on your fingertip. It measures the amount of oxygen in your body. Follow your healthcare team's instructions on its use, how they will be in touch with you, and when to call them.

The FDA approved monoclonal antibody therapy for emergency investigational use in certain people who have a positive COVID-19 viral test and have mild to moderate symptoms but are not in the hospital. Your healthcare provider will advise you on whether monoclonal antibody therapy is appropriate for you. It's not approved to prevent COVID-19. It's approved for people 12 years and older who weigh about 88 pounds (40 kgs) and are at high risk for severe COVID-19 and a hospital stay. This includes people who are 65 years and older and people with certain chronic conditions. Monoclonal antibody therapy is **not approved** for people who:

- Are in the hospital with COVID-19, **or**
- Need oxygen therapy for COVID-19, **or**
- Need oxygen therapy for a chronic condition and need to have oxygen flow increased because of COVID-19

If you've had confirmed COVID-19, your healthcare team may ask you to consider donating your plasma. This is called COVID-19 convalescent plasma donation. Plasma from people fully recovered from COVID-19 may contain antibodies to help fight COVID-19 in people who are currently seriously ill with the disease. Experts don't know the safety of COVID-19 convalescent plasma or how well it works. Research continues. The FDA has approved it for emergency use in certain people with serious or life-threatening COVID-19.

Home care for a sick person

- Follow all instructions from healthcare staff.
- Wash your hands often.
- Wear protective clothing as advised.
- Make sure the sick person wears a mask. If they can't wear a mask, don't stay in the same room with the person. If you must be in the same room, wear a face mask. When wearing a mask, make sure that it covers both the nose and mouth.
- Keep track of the sick person's symptoms.
- Clean home surfaces often with disinfectant. This includes phones, kitchen counters, fridge door handle, bathroom surfaces, and others.
- Don't let anyone share household items with the sick person. This includes eating and drinking tools, towels, sheets, or blankets.
- Clean fabrics and laundry thoroughly.
- Keep other people and pets away from the sick person.

When you can stop self-isolation

When you are sick with COVID-19, you should stay away from other people. This is called self-isolation.

For normally healthy children or adults with COVID-19 symptoms, CDC advises stopping self-isolation when all 3 of these are true:

1. You have had no fever for at least 24 hours. This means no fever without medicine that reduces fever, such as acetaminophen, for at least 24 hours.
2. Your symptoms such as cough or trouble breathing have improved.
3. It has been at least 10 days since your first symptoms started.

For people who have COVID-19 but **no symptoms**, isolation can stop 10 days after the first positive test.

If you have a weak immune system and COVID-19, or if you've had severe COVID-19, your instructions on when to stop isolation will be somewhat different. Some conditions and treatments can cause a weak immune system. These include cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplants, and conditions such as HIV or other immune system disorders. You may be advised to self-isolate up to 20 days after your symptoms first started. Your healthcare provider may want to retest you for COVID-19. Follow your provider's instructions.

CDC mask guidance

Consider the CDC's guidance and your local community's instructions on face masks.

- Cloth masks may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
- Cloth masks are most likely to reduce COVID-19 spread when masks are widely used by people who are out in the public.
- Wear a mask inside your house if you live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- CDC advises all people older than 2 who are not fully vaccinated to wear a mask and stay 6 feet away from others while in public.
- CDC advises people with weak immune systems, even if fully vaccinated, to continue wearing masks and to stay 6 feet away from others while in public.
- CDC advises indoor masking for **all** teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- Like other viruses, the virus that causes COVID-19 changes (mutates) all the time. This leads to variants that are easily spread, including the delta variant. To protect against variants, CDC advises all people over age 2, including those who are fully vaccinated, to wear a mask indoors in public settings if you are in an area of high numbers of COVID-19 cases. See the [CDC's county data website](#) for current transmission information in your area.

Certain people should not wear a face mask. This includes:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone with a health, developmental, or mental health condition that can be made worse by wearing a mask
- Anyone who is unconscious or unable to remove the face covering without help

See the CDC's [mask guidance](#).

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if a sick person has any of these:

- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in chest

If a sick person has any of these, **call 911**:

- Trouble breathing that gets worse
- Pain or pressure in chest that gets worse
- Blue tint to lips or face
- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Confusion or trouble waking
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Coughing up blood

Going home from the hospital

If you were diagnosed with COVID-19 and were recently discharged from the hospital:

- Follow the instructions above for self-care and isolation.
- Follow the hospital healthcare team's specific instructions.
- Ask questions if anything is unclear to you. Write down answers so you remember them.

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