

# COVID-19

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*As COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to spread across the world, we understand that there are many concerns in our community about health and safety. **Call your established healthcare provider to discuss an action plan for care should you develop symptoms or if you think you have been exposed.** Resources on general COVID-19 information are webpages for the [Centers for Disease Control](#), the [World Health Organization](#), and your own state's Health Department.*

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus that affects the respiratory system and can lead to pneumonia. The name stands for Coronavirus Disease of 2019.

## What are the Symptoms?

The primary symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, a new loss of taste or smell. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The illness can be severe and require hospitalization, but most individuals recover by resting and drinking plenty of liquids.

## How does it spread?

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets from coughs or sneezes from someone who is infected. These droplets then land on surfaces and can live on different surfaces for various amounts of time. People who are infected often have symptoms of illness. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.

- To become sick, you have to be exposed to the virus. Being within 6 feet (2 meters) of someone has the virus.
- Exposure can occur through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu and other respiratory viruses spread.
- It may be possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

## How to avoid getting COVID-19

People who have been to areas where widespread community transmission is occurring are at risk of infection, as well as people who have had direct close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

We encourage everyone to follow the CDC guidelines to prevent exposure to and spread of COVID-19. This includes:

- Wash your hands regularly using soap and water for 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 available, then use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- If you use a wheelchair, disinfect areas you touch frequently, like the handrims.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue if you have to cough or sneeze, and throw that tissue into the trash. Then immediately wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- Wear a face mask if you are sick and interacting with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering in public places where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Cloth face covers are not substitutes for physical distancing, washing your hands, and staying home when ill.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Avoid contact with people who are already sick.
- Practice “social distancing” by avoiding contact with others in your community to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Stopping the spread of COVID-19 is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick. People who are at higher risk are those with serious underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease. Older adults are also at a higher risk.

## What to do if you think you might be sick

If you feel like there is a chance that you may have COVID-19, call your primary care provider. They will work to make sure you receive the proper testing to determine if you have COVID-19.

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately.

Emergency warning signs include\*:

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.