



IF YOU ARE FULLY VACCINATED

Find [new guidance for fully vaccinated people](#). If you are not vaccinated, [find a vaccine](#).

COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated July 9, 2021

[Print](#)

What are you looking for?

Enter a word or phrase below to locate questions and answers that match.

Basics

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Most people with COVID-19 have mild [symptoms](#), but some people can become severely ill. Although most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks of illness, some people experience post-COVID conditions. **Post-COVID conditions** are a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems people can experience **more than four weeks** after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Older people and those who have [certain underlying medical conditions](#) are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. [Vaccines](#) against COVID-19 are safe and effective.

Why is the disease being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?

On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization [announced](#) an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic, first identified in Wuhan China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, "CO" stands for corona, "VI" for virus, and "D" for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV."

Spread

How does the virus spread?

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person to person, including between people who are physically near each other (within about 6 feet). People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others. [Cases of reinfection with COVID-19 have been reported but are rare](#). We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes.

COVID-19 spreads very easily from person to person. How easily a virus spreads from person to person can vary. The virus that causes COVID-19 appears to spread more efficiently than influenza but not as efficiently as measles, which is among the most contagious viruses known to affect people.

For more information about how COVID-19 spreads, visit the [How COVID-19 Spreads](#) page to learn how COVID-19 spreads and how to protect yourself.

What is community spread?

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. Each health department determines community spread differently based on local conditions. For information on community spread in your area, please visit your [local health department's website](#).

Can mosquitoes or ticks spread the virus that causes COVID-19?

At this time, CDC has no data to suggest that this new coronavirus or other similar coronaviruses are spread by mosquitoes or ticks. The main way that COVID-19 spreads is from person to person. See [How Coronavirus Spreads](#) for more information.

Prevention

How can I protect myself?

Visit the [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#) page to learn about how to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses, like COVID-19.

Does CDC recommend the use of masks to prevent COVID-19?

Yes. CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people. When you wear a mask, you protect others as well as yourself. [Masks work best when everyone wears one](#). A mask is NOT a substitute for [social distancing](#). Masks should still be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially when indoors around people who don't live in your household.

Effective February 2, 2021, [masks are required](#) on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

While masks are strongly encouraged to reduce the spread of COVID-19, CDC recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a mask may not be feasible. In these instances, [adaptations and alternatives](#) should be considered whenever possible.

More information about masks can be found on our [masks site](#).

- [Your Guide to Masks](#)
- [How to Wear](#)
- [How to Store and Wash](#)
- [Improve How Your Mask Protects You](#)
- [Types of Masks](#)
- [Guidance for Wearing Masks](#)
- [Improve Fit and Filtration of Your Mask](#)

Is it safe to get care for my other medical conditions during this time?

- Continue taking care of your health and wellness
- **Continue your medications**, and do not change your treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider.
- **Continue to manage your disease** the way your healthcare provider has told you.
- **Have at least a 2-week supply** of all prescription and non-prescription medications.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider about whether your vaccinations and other preventative services** are up to date.
- **Call your healthcare provider**
 - **if you have any concerns** about your medical conditions, or if you get sick.
 - **to find out about different ways you can connect** with your healthcare provider for chronic disease management or other conditions.
 - If you must visit in-person, [protect yourself and others](#).
- **Do not delay getting emergency care for your health problems or any underlying medical condition** that requires immediate attention.
 - If you need emergency help, call 911.
 - Emergency departments have infection prevention plans to protect you from getting COVID-19 if you need care for your medical condition.
- **Continue** to practice [everyday prevention](#). Wash your hands often, avoid close contact, wear a mask, cover coughs and sneezes, and clean frequently touched surfaces often.
- When picking up medicines, use drive-thru windows, curbside services (prescriptions brought to you in your car), mail-order, or other delivery services.

For more information, see [Groups at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#).

Am I at risk for COVID-19 from mail, packages, or products?

Coronaviruses are thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products, or packaging. However, it may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Learn more about [safe handling of deliveries and mail](#).

Is it okay for me to donate blood?



In healthcare settings across the United States, donated blood is a lifesaving, essential part of caring for patients. The need for donated blood is constant, and blood centers are open and in urgent need of donations. CDC encourages people who are well to continue to donate blood if they are able, even if they are practicing social distancing because of COVID-19. CDC is supporting blood centers by providing recommendations that will keep donors and staff safe. Examples of these recommendations include spacing donor chairs 6 feet apart, thoroughly adhering to environmental cleaning practices, and encouraging donors to make donation appointments ahead of time.

Should contact lens wearers take special precautions to prevent COVID-19?



- Currently, there is no evidence to suggest contact lens wearers are more at risk for acquiring COVID-19 than eyeglass wearers.
- Contact lens wearers should continue to [practice safe contact lens wear and care hygiene habits](#) to help prevent against transmission of any contact lens-related infections, such as always washing hands with soap and water before handling lenses.
- People who are healthy can continue to wear and care for their contact lenses as prescribed by their eye care professional.

Find more information about [how coronavirus spreads](#) and [how to protect yourself](#).

Visit [CDC's contact lens website](#) for more information on healthy contact lens wear and care.

Is contact lens disinfecting solution effective against COVID-19?



- [Hydrogen peroxide-based systems](#) for cleaning, disinfecting, and storing contact lenses should be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19.
 - For other disinfection methods, such as multipurpose solution and ultrasonic cleaners, there is currently not enough scientific evidence to determine efficacy against the virus.
- [Always use solution](#) to disinfect your contact lenses and case to kill germs that may be present.
- Handle your lenses over a surface that has been cleaned and disinfected.

Find more information about [how coronavirus spreads](#) and [how to protect yourself](#).

Visit [CDC's contact lens website](#) for more information on healthy contact lens wear and care.

Should I use soap and water or hand sanitizer to protect against COVID-19?



[Handwashing](#) is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, [use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol](#).

What cleaning products should I use to protect against COVID-19?



Clean frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces and objects by removing contaminants and may weaken or damage some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces. You may choose to also disinfect depending on [certain conditions](#) or everyday practices required by your home. To disinfect, most common Environmental Protection Agency-registered household disinfectants will work. See CDC's recommendations [for household cleaning and disinfection](#).

Should masks be required in areas with substantial-to-high COVID-19 spread?

Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, the availability of screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the layered prevention strategies (e.g., masking, distancing) needed in their communities. CDC supports localities making decisions based on local circumstances. For example, a city, region, or state with low vaccination coverage may require masks as a prevention strategy as community spread of COVID-19 increases.

If You or Someone You Know is Sick or Had Contact with Someone who Has COVID-19

What should I do if I get sick or someone in my house gets sick?

Most people who get COVID-19 will be able to recover at home. </coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html> for people who are recovering at home and their caregivers, including:

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html> [CDC has directions](#)
- If you have COVID-19, [tell your close contacts](#) so that they can quarantine at home and get tested.
- Use a separate room and bathroom for sick household members (if possible).
- The person who is sick should isolate. Learn [when and how to isolate](#).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use [an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol](#). Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- The person who is sick should wear a [mask](#) when they are around other people at home. They do not need to wear a mask if they are alone.
- [Clean the sick room and bathroom](#), as needed, to avoid unnecessary contact with the sick person.

However, some people may need emergency medical attention. Watch for symptoms and learn [when to seek emergency medical attention](#).

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.

What should I do if I have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19?

- The best way to protect yourself and others is to [quarantine by staying home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19](#). Check your [local health department's website](#) for information

about [options in your area to possibly shorten this quarantine period](#).

- Be alert for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from others, especially [people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19](#).
- You may NOT need to quarantine if:
 - You have been [fully vaccinated](#) and have no symptoms
 - You were [previously diagnosed with COVID-19](#) within the last three months and don't develop any new symptoms

What are the recommendations for someone who begins experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

If you begin experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#), put on a [mask](#) that covers your nose and mouth, get tested, and stay away from other people. Until you receive a negative COVID-19 test or guidance from your healthcare provider that you do not pose a risk of transmitting infection to others, you should take these steps to protect yourself and others:

- Stay at home (except to get medical care).
- Separate yourself from others.
- Monitor your symptoms.
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when around others.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands often.
- Clean high-touch surfaces every day.
- Avoid sharing personal household items.

Vaccines

See [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#) for answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 Vaccines.

Children

What is the risk of my child becoming sick with COVID-19?

Children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and can get sick with COVID-19. Most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or they may have no symptoms at all (“asymptomatic”). Fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults. Babies younger than 1 and children with [certain underlying medical conditions](#) may be more likely to have serious illness from COVID-19. Some children have developed a rare but serious disease that is linked to COVID-19 called [multisystem inflammatory syndrome \(MIS-C\)](#).

For more information for parents or caregivers of children, see [Children and Teens](#) and the [COVID-19 Parental Resources Kit](#).

For more information about how people get sick with the virus that causes COVID-19, see [How COVID-19 Spreads](#).

Should children wear masks?

In general, children 2 years and older should [wear a mask](#). However, CDC recognizes that wearing masks may not be possible in every situation or for some people. Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some children, such as children with certain disabilities, including cognitive, intellectual, developmental, sensory and behavioral disorders. Learn more about what you should do if your child or you [cannot wear masks in certain situations](#) and [special considerations](#) for children who may have difficulties with techniques for improved fit and filtration.

What is multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)?

[Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children \(MIS-C\)](#) is a serious condition associated with COVID-19 where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. For information, see [MIS-C](#).

Can my child spend time with older adults and people with chronic medical conditions?

[Older adults](#) and people who have certain [underlying medical conditions](#) are at increased risk for getting severely ill from COVID-19. To protect those who are at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#), you may consider taking these extra precautions.

- Separate your child from others in your household who have an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Carefully consider who might be best to provide childcare if you are unable to care for your child (for example, you are not able to stay with your child while childcare or school is closed).
- Limit your child's contact with other people if someone at higher risk for COVID-19 will be providing care (such as an [older adult](#) or someone with [an underlying medical condition](#)).
- Postpone visits or trips to see grandparents, older family members and family members who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Consider connecting virtually or by writing letters.

My child has an underlying medical condition. What additional steps should my family take?


Children with [underlying medical conditions](#) are at increased risk for severe illness compared to children without underlying medical conditions. Current evidence on which underlying medical conditions in children are associated with increased risk is limited. Children with the following conditions might be at increased risk for severe illness: obesity, medical complexity, severe genetic disorders, severe neurologic disorders, inherited metabolic disorders, sickle cell disease, congenital (since birth) heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, asthma and other chronic lung disease, and immunosuppression due to malignancy or immune-weakening medications. In addition to following the recommendations to [prevent getting sick](#), families can take steps recommended for [children with underlying conditions](#).

- Consider identifying potential alternative caregivers, in case you or other regular caregivers become sick and are unable to care for your child. If possible, these alternative caregivers should not be at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#). For more information, see [Sick Parents and Caregivers](#). Make sure these caregivers take extra precautions if [your child has a disability](#).
- If your child receives any support care services in the home, such as services from personal care attendants, direct support professionals, or therapists, make plans for what you will do if your child's direct care providers or anyone in your family gets sick. You can review CDC's recommendations for [Direct Service Providers](#).

For more information, see [Children and Teens](#) and [Others who Need Extra Precautions](#).

Should my infant or child be tested for COVID-19?

Not everyone needs to be tested. Your infant or child may need to be tested for COVID-19 if your child:

- Has [symptoms of COVID-19](#), or
- Had [close contact](#) (within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or
- Took part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19, because they could not stay at least 6 feet apart as needed (such as travel, attending large social or mass gatherings, or being in a crowded or poorly ventilated indoor setting), or
- Was asked or referred to get testing by their [state](#), [tribal](#), [local](#) , or [territorial health department](#) or healthcare provider.

If your child is tested **because they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or have been in [close contact with someone with COVID-19](#)**, keep your child home **until they can safely end [isolation](#) or [quarantine](#)** and follow the advice of your healthcare provider or a public health professional. If your child has [recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months](#) and *does not* have symptoms of COVID-19, they do not need to be retested for up to 3 months from their last positive test result.

Symptoms & Emergency Warning Signs

What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?

People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. If you have fever, cough, or other [symptoms](#), you might have COVID-19.

When should I seek emergency care if I have COVID-19?

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
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

*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.

Is it possible to have the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

Yes. It is possible to test positive for flu (as well as other respiratory infections) and COVID-19 at the same time. Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the [difference](#) between them based on

symptoms alone. [Testing](#) may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis.

The best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year. Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce your chances of getting flu. See [Prevent Seasonal Flu](#) for more information.

Testing

Is at-home specimen collection or testing available?


Yes. At-home testing and collection allow you to collect a specimen at home and either send it to a testing facility or perform the test at home.

You and your healthcare provider might consider either an at-home collection kit or an at-home test if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or if you can't get testing at a local healthcare facility.

For more information, see [At-Home Testing](#).

Should I be tested for a current infection?

The following should be tested for current infection:


- People who have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- Most people who have had [close contact](#) (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with confirmed COVID-19.
 - [Fully vaccinated](#) people with no COVID-19 symptoms do not need to be tested following an exposure to someone with COVID-19.
 - People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not need to get tested following an exposure as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- People who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 because they cannot physically distance as needed to avoid [exposure](#) such as travel, attending large social or mass gatherings, or being in crowded or poorly-ventilated indoor settings.
- People who have been asked or referred to get [tested](#) by their healthcare provider, or [state](#), [tribal](#), [local](#) , or [territorial health department](#).


CDC recommends that anyone with any signs or [symptoms of COVID-19](#) get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection. If you get tested because you have symptoms or were potentially exposed to the virus, you should stay away from others pending test results and follow the advice of your health care provider or a public health professional.

How can I get tested for a current infection (viral test) and what does my test mean?

A [viral test](#) checks specimens from your nose or your mouth to find out if you are **currently infected** with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

the virus that causes COVID-19.

Contact your healthcare provider or visit your [state, tribal, local](#) , and territorial [health department's website](#) to find the latest local information on testing. The type of viral COVID-19 tests offered differ by location. You and your healthcare provider might also consider either an [at-home collection kit](#) or an [at-home test](#) if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and if you are not able to be tested by a healthcare provider or public health official.

While waiting for [test results](#)  [2 pages, 224KB], you should [self-quarantine](#) at home and [stay](#) away from others, including those living in your household. If your test results are positive, [isolate yourself](#). If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are not tested, it is still important to stay home. For more information, visit [What to Do if You Are Sick](#) and [When to Quarantine](#).

How can I get tested for a past infection (antibody test) and what does my test mean?

Antibody tests for COVID-19 are available through healthcare providers and laboratories. Check with your healthcare provider to see if they offer antibody tests and whether you should get one.

A positive test result shows you might have antibodies from an infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. However, there is a chance a positive result means that you have antibodies from an infection with a virus from the same family of viruses (called coronaviruses), such as the one that causes the common cold.

Having antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19 might provide some protection from getting infected with the virus again. If it does, we do not know how much protection the antibodies might provide or how long this protection might last. Confirmed and suspected cases of reinfection have been reported, but remain rare.

You should continue to [protect yourself and others](#) since you could get infected with the virus again.

If you test negative, you might not have ever had COVID-19. Talk with your healthcare provider about your test result and the type of test you took to understand what your result means.

Regardless of whether you test positive or negative, the results do not confirm whether or not you are able to spread the virus that causes COVID-19. Until we know more, continue to take steps to [protect yourself and others](#).

If you want more information about antibody tests, see [Test for Past Infection](#).

Can someone test negative and later test positive on a viral test for COVID-19?

Yes, it is possible. You may test negative if the sample was collected early in your infection and test positive later during this illness. You could also be exposed to COVID-19 after the test and get infected then. Even if you test negative, you still should take steps to [protect yourself and others](#). See [Testing for Current Infection](#) for more information.

People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness

Who is at increased risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19?

[People at increased risk](#) include:

- [Older adults](#)
- [People of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions](#)

[Pregnant and recently pregnant people](#) are also at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many people from [racial and ethnic minority groups](#) at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.

In addition to those at increased risk, there are [certain groups of people who require extra precautions during the](#)

Are there any medications I should avoid taking if I have COVID-19?

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that taking any specific medications, like blood pressure medication or ibuprofen, leads to more severe illness from COVID-19.

- Continue to take your medications and to follow your treatment plan as prescribed by your healthcare provider. Any changes to your medications should only be made after talking with your healthcare provider.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

For more information, see [People with Underlying Medical Conditions](#).

Are people with disabilities at higher risk?

Adults with disabilities are more likely to have an [underlying medical condition](#) that may put them at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 including, but not limited to, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, cancer, high blood pressure, and obesity. In addition, having a disability may make it harder to practice social distancing, [wear a mask](#), and practice hand hygiene.

For more information, see [People with Disabilities](#) and [People who May Need Extra Precautions](#).

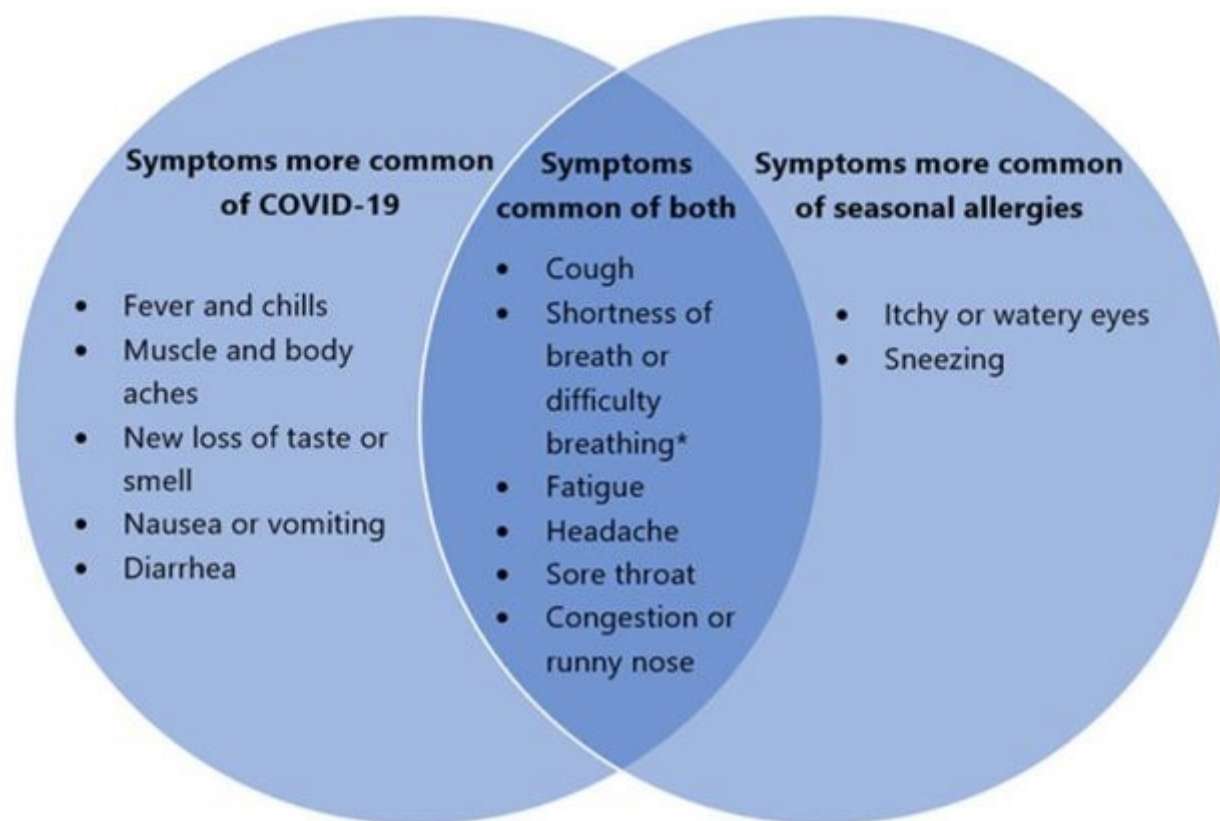
People with Seasonal Allergies

What is the difference between COVID-19 and seasonal allergies?

COVID-19 is a contagious respiratory illness caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19). Seasonal allergies triggered by airborne pollen can lead to seasonal allergic rhinitis, which affects the nose and sinuses, and seasonal allergic conjunctivitis, which affects the eyes.

COVID-19 and seasonal allergies share many symptoms, but there are some key differences between the two. For example, COVID-19 can cause fever, which is not a common symptom of seasonal allergies. The image below compares symptoms caused by allergies and COVID-19.

Because some of the symptoms of COVID-19 and seasonal allergies are similar, it may be difficult to tell the difference between them, and you may need to get a test to confirm your diagnosis



508 version

**Seasonal allergies do not usually cause shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, unless a person has a respiratory condition such as asthma that can be triggered by exposure to pollen.*

This is not a complete list of all possible symptoms of COVID-19 or seasonal allergies. Symptoms vary from person to person and range from mild to severe. You can have symptoms of both COVID-19 and seasonal allergies at the same time.

If you think you have COVID-19, follow CDC's guidance on ["What to do if you are sick."](#) If you have **an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing)**, seek emergency medical care immediately.

Get more information on [COVID-19 symptoms](#), or more information on [seasonal allergy symptoms](#) [↗](#).

Does having seasonal allergies increase my risk of contracting COVID-19 or having more severe symptoms if I do contract COVID-19? ^

There is not enough scientific information at this time to know whether having seasonal allergies puts you at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 or having more severe symptoms if you do contract COVID-19. We do know that older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like obesity, diabetes, or heart or lung disease are at higher risk for developing more serious complications when they have COVID-19. Get more information on people at [high risk for severe COVID-19](#).

Will I be protected from seasonal allergies if I wear a mask? ^

CDC recommends wearing [masks](#) to slow the spread of COVID-19. Everyone should wear a mask covering unless they are under 2 years of age, have breathing problems, or are unconscious or incapacitated and would need assistance removing a mask. Masks also offer some protection against seasonal allergies because they can prevent some larger particles from being inhaled. However, if you have seasonal allergies, masks should not be your only protection against pollen exposure because smaller particles can still get through the covering and be inhaled.

Wash your masks after each use, particularly if you suffer from seasonal allergies, because the covering may carry particles such as pollen. See information on how to [wash masks](#).

How can I protect myself from seasonal allergies?



The best way to protect yourself against seasonal allergies is to reduce your exposure to pollen. During high pollen days:

- Limit your time outdoors and seek indoor spaces with clean air.
- Create a cleaner air space at home to protect yourself from outdoor air irritants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Use a portable air cleaner in one or more rooms. Portable air cleaners work best when run continuously with doors and windows closed. [Do-it-yourself box fan](#) filtration units are a low-cost filtration alternative, but they should never be left unattended.
- Keep your cleaner air space a comfortable temperature by using air conditioners, heat pumps, fans, and window shades.
- If you have a forced air system in your home, consult a qualified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) professional about different filters (HEPA or MERV-13 or higher) and settings (“Recirculate” and “On” rather than “Auto”) that can be used to reduce indoor air irritants.
- If outdoors, avoid activities that stir up pollen, such as mowing lawns or raking leaves. When you return indoors, take a shower and change your clothes.

The EPA website on [indoor air and COVID-19](#) and the [EPA Guide to Air Cleaners in the Home](#) [7 pages, 2.93mb] provide additional information on improving indoor air quality. You can also find out the daily pollen levels in your area by checking local weather forecasts and [pollen counting stations](#). Learn more about [reducing your exposure to respiratory triggers](#).

Contact Tracing

What is contact tracing?



Contact tracing has been used for decades by state and local health departments to slow or stop the spread of infectious diseases.

Contact tracing slows the spread of COVID-19 by

- Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and [symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 get tested
- Asking people to [self-isolate](#) if they have COVID-19 or [self-quarantine](#) if they are a [close contact](#) of someone with COVID-19

During contact tracing, the health department staff **will not** ask you for

- Money
- Social Security number
- Bank account information
- Salary information
- Credit card numbers

What will happen with my personal information during contact tracing?



Discussions with health department staff are confidential. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your health care provider.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, your name will not be shared with those you came in contact with. The health department will only notify people you were in [close contact](#) with that they might have been exposed to COVID-19. Each state and jurisdiction use their own method for collecting and protecting health information. To learn more, contact your state or local health department.


You may also be interested in: [If I participate contact tracing for COVID-19 using a digital tool, is my personal health information secure?](#)


Who is considered a close contact of someone with COVID-19?

For COVID-19, a [close contact](#) is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, if they are asymptomatic, 2 days before their specimen that tested positive was collected), until they meet the criteria for [discontinuing home isolation](#).

You may also be interested in: [What should I do if I have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19?](#)

I have COVID-19. How do I tell the people I was around?

If you have COVID-19, [tell your close contacts](#)  [93 KB, 2 Pages] you have COVID-19 so that they can quarantine at home and get tested. By letting your [close contacts](#) know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect them and others within your community.

You can call, text, or email your contacts. If you would like to stay anonymous, there is also an online tool that allows you to tell your contacts by sending out emails or text notifications anonymously (www.tellyourcontacts.org ).

Does mask use help determine if someone is considered a close contact?

A person is still considered a [close contact](#) even if one or both people wore a mask when they were together.

[Masks work best when everyone wears one](#). However, [masks](#) are not 100% effective at preventing spread of COVID-19, and the type of masks used and whether or not they are used consistently and correctly varies throughout the general population. Therefore, mask use is not considered when determining whether someone is a close contact during case investigation and contact tracing.

If I am a close contact, will I be tested for COVID-19?

If you have been in [close contact](#) with someone who has COVID-19, you should be tested, even if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19. The health department may be able to provide resources for testing in your area.

- While you are waiting for your COVID-19 test result, stay home away from others ([self-quarantine](#)) and monitor your health [for symptoms of COVID-19](#) to protect your friends, family, and others from possibly getting COVID-19.
- If your **test is positive**, you should continue to stay home and [self-isolate](#) away from others and monitor your health. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and they worsen or become severe, you should seek emergency medical care. Severe symptoms include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone.

Source: from the health department's "What to do if you have COVID-19"

someone from the health department may call you to

- Check on your health,
 - Discuss who you have been around, and
 - Ask where you have spent time while you may have been able to spread COVID-19 to others.
- The best way to protect yourself and others is to [stay home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19](#). Check your [local health department's website](#) for information about options in your area to possibly shorten this quarantine period.
- If your **test is negative** and you **don't have symptoms**, you should continue to stay home and [self-quarantine](#) away from others for **14 days** after your last exposure to COVID-19 and follow all recommendations from the health department. This is important because symptoms can appear up to **14 days** after you've been exposed and are infected. A negative result before the end of your quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. Additionally, you do not need a repeat test unless you develop symptoms, or if you require a test to return to work.
- If your **test is negative** and you **have symptoms**, you should continue to self-quarantine away from others for **14 days** after your last exposure to COVID-19 and follow all recommendations from the health department. Additional medical consultation and a second test may be needed if your symptoms do not improve.

What will happen during contact tracing if I am diagnosed with COVID-19?

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you to check on your health, discuss who you have been around, and ask where you spent time while you may have been able to spread COVID-19 to others. You will also be asked to continue to stay at home and [self-isolate](#), away from others.

- Your name **will not** be shared with those you came in contact with.
- The health department staff **will not** ask you for
 - Money
 - Social Security number
 - Bank account information
 - Salary information, or
 - Credit card numbers
- Self-isolation means staying at home in a specific room away from other people and [pets](#), and using a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Self-isolation helps slow the spread of COVID-19 and can help protect the health of your family, friends, neighbors, and others you may come in contact.
- If you need support or assistance while in self-isolation, your health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

Watch for or monitor your [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If your symptoms worsen or become severe, you should seek medical care.

What will happen during contact tracing if I have been around someone with COVID-19?

If you were around someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you to let you know that you may have been exposed to COVID-19.

The best way to protect yourself and others is to [stay home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19](#). Check your [local health department's website](#) for information about options in your area to possibly shorten this quarantine period. Health department staff will help identify the dates for your self-quarantine. Health department staff can also provide resources for COVID-19 testing in your area.

- Self-quarantine means staying home away from others and monitoring your health.

- If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a mask. This will help protect the people around you.
- If you need support or assistance while in self-quarantine, your health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

Monitor your health and watch for [symptoms of COVID-19](#). Remember, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after you were exposed to COVID-19. Tell the health department if you develop any symptoms. Tell people you were around recently if you become ill, so they can monitor their health. If your symptoms worsen or become severe, seek medical care. [Severe symptoms](#) include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone.

The health department staff **will not** ask you for

- Money
- Social Security number
- Bank account information
- Salary information, or
- Credit card numbers

I was around someone who has COVID-19, and my COVID-19 test came back negative. Do I still need to quarantine for 14 days after I was last exposed? 

Yes. You should still self-quarantine for 14 days since your last exposure. It can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for a person to develop COVID-19 symptoms. A negative result before end of the 14-day quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. By self-quarantining for 14 days, you lower the chance of possibly exposing others to COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself and others is to [stay home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19](#). Check your [local health department's website](#) for information about options in your area to possibly shorten this quarantine period.

I was recently around someone who has COVID-19, but I feel fine. Why should I stay at home? 

People with COVID-19 can still spread the virus even if they don't have any symptoms. If you were around someone who had COVID-19, it is critical that you stay home and away from others for 14 days from the last day that you were around that person. Staying home and away from others at all times helps your health department in the fight against COVID-19 and helps protect you, your family, and your community. The best way to protect yourself and others is to [stay home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19](#). Check your [local health department's website](#) for information about options in your area to possibly shorten this quarantine period.

What if I have been around someone who was identified as a close contact? 

- The best way to protect yourself and others is to [quarantine by staying home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19](#). Check your [local health department's website](#) for information about [options in your area to possibly shorten this quarantine period](#).
- Be alert for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- You may NOT need to quarantine if:
 - You have been [fully vaccinated](#) and have no symptoms

- You were [previously diagnosed with COVID-19](#) within the last three months and don't develop any new symptoms

Will there be a national app for contact tracing?

No, there will not be a national app for contact tracing. There are many options available now, and it is up to each state and individual to decide which tools best fit their needs.

If I participate in contact tracing for COVID-19 using a digital tool, is my personal health information secure?

Yes, if you agree to participate in contact tracing for COVID-19 with the health department, your information is secure. Discussions with health department staff are confidential. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your health care provider. Your name will not be shared with those you came in contact with. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the health department will only notify people you were in [close contact](#) with that they might have been exposed to COVID-19.

Health departments may use *case management tools* to help make the contact tracing process more efficient. If you choose to provide information through one of these tools, your information is secure and stored with the health department. These tools also help health departments quickly receive and analyze information about COVID-19. Case management tools are under the same laws and regulations for all sensitive health information use (e.g. HIPPA). You must provide consent for the health department to collect information using a case management tool. Just like traditional contact tracing, digital tools will not collect information regarding money, Social Security numbers, bank account information, salary information, or credit card numbers.

Exposure notification tools may be an app that you can download on your personal cell phone. If you choose to download an *exposure notification app* for COVID-19, your information is secure. Exposure notification apps are developed in collaboration with or endorsed by health departments. These apps undergo rigorous testing to determine their trustworthiness, security, and ability to protect people's privacy. Until you give consent to share information with your local health department, any information you have entered into the app is stored *only* on your personal phone. Your information is stored only on your own phone and is not sent to the health department or any other third party. **The app and your information can be deleted any time.** When you consent to share your information with the local health department, your information is secure.

Will I be required to download a contact tracing app for COVID-19 on my phone?

No, you are not required to download an app to give information for contact tracing for COVID-19. Health departments commonly use *case management tools* to make the contact tracing process more efficient. These types of tools are not downloaded on personal cell phones.

If you choose to give information to your local or state health department for contact tracing for COVID-19, you do not need to download an app on your cell phone. The health department staff may call you to


- Check on your health,
- Discuss who you have been around, and
- Ask where you have spent time while you may have been able to spread COVID-19 to others.

It is up to you to decide if you download an *exposure notification app* for COVID-19.

Funerals

Am I at risk if I go to a funeral or visitation service for someone who died of COVID-19? 

There is currently no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation service with the body of someone who died of COVID-19. However, you may be at risk of getting COVID-19 if you attend a funeral where there are multiple people congregating. For more information about what you can do to help protect yourself and others from COVID-19 during these services, and to help cope with the loss of a loved one, see [Funeral Guidance](#).



What should loved ones know about handling belongings and the body of someone who died from COVID-19? 

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to [spread](#) from close contact (i.e., within about 6 feet) with a person who is infected with the virus. The virus spreads primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

This type of spread is not a concern after death. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. If the deceased person had confirmed or suspected COVID-19, avoid kissing, washing, or shrouding the body before, during, and after the body has been prepared, if possible. For more information on recommended precautions while handling the belongings and the body of someone who died from COVID-19, see [Funeral Guidance](#).


Cleaning and Disinfection

Do disinfectants kill new strains of COVID-19? 

CDC, in collaboration with [EPA](#) , expects all products on [List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)  to kill all strains of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Genetic mutations to COVID-19 do not impact the effectiveness of disinfectants. Destroying a virus is dependent on its physical properties, and recent genetic changes have not changed the basic physical properties of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Learn more about cleaning and disinfection recommendations for [facilities](#) and [homes](#).

Do car seats and booster seats need extra cleaning and disinfection to prevent spread of COVID-19? If so, how should car seats and booster seats be cleaned and disinfected? 

It may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this isn't thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces and objects by removing contaminants and may weaken or damage some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces. You may choose to also disinfect depending on [certain conditions](#) or everyday practices required by your home. Washing hands frequently or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol also prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Some cleaning and [disinfect](#) products are not recommended for use on car seats and booster seats. Owners should

What is the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

Cleaning with soap and water or a detergent removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It lowers the risk of spreading infection. Disinfecting with a household disinfectant on [List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) kills germs on the surface. By disinfecting or killing germs on a surface **after** cleaning the surface, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. For more information review cleaning and disinfection recommendations for [facilities](#) and [homes](#).

Is it safe to vacuum in a school, business, or community facility after someone with COVID-19 was there?

The risk of spreading COVID-19 during vacuuming is unknown. At this time, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 associated with vacuuming.

- After cleaning:
 - Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and bags, if available.
 - Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
 - While vacuuming, temporarily turn off in-room, window-mounted, or on-wall recirculation HVAC to avoid contamination of the HVAC units.
 - Do NOT deactivate central HVAC systems. These systems tend to provide better filtration capabilities and introduce outdoor air into the areas that they serve.

How effective are alternative disinfection methods, such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light?

The efficacy of these disinfection methods against the virus that causes COVID-19 is not known. EPA only recommends use of the [surface disinfectants identified on List N](#) against the virus that causes COVID-19. EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices, such as UV lights, LED lights, or ultrasonic devices. However, CDC is producing guidance on use of Germicidal ultraviolet as an alternative disinfection method. Therefore, EPA cannot confirm whether, or under what circumstances, such products might be effective against the spread of COVID-19. For more information on CDC's recommendations for primary surface disinfection in occupied environments please visit the [CDC/EPA guidance for surface disinfection](#).

Can sanitizing tunnels be used at facility entrances or exits to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

CDC does not recommend the use of sanitizing tunnels. There is no evidence that they are effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. In addition, chemicals used in sanitizing tunnels could cause skin, eye, or respiratory irritation or damage.

Should sidewalks, roads, and other outdoor spaces be disinfected to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

CDC does not recommend disinfection of sidewalks, roads, or most other outdoor spaces. Spraying disinfectant on

sidewalks, roads, and other outdoor spaces is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public. The risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 from these surfaces is very low and disinfection is not effective on these surfaces.

Pets and Animals

Can I get COVID-19 from my pets or other animals?

Based on the available information to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. See [If You Have Pets](#) for more information about pets and COVID-19.

However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to practice [healthy habits](#) around pets and other animals, such as washing your hands and maintaining good hygiene. For more information on the many benefits of pet ownership, as well as staying safe and healthy around animals including pets, livestock, and wildlife, visit CDC's [Healthy Pets, Healthy People website](#).

Can animals carry the virus that causes COVID-19 on their skin or fur?

Although we know certain bacteria and fungi can be carried on fur and hair, there is no evidence that viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19, can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets.

However, because animals can sometimes carry other germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice [healthy habits](#) around pets and other animals, including washing hands before and after interacting with them.

Can I use hand sanitizer on pets?

Do not wipe or bathe your pet with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners. If you have questions about appropriate products for bathing or cleaning your pet, talk to your veterinarian. If your pet gets hand sanitizer on their skin or fur, rinse or wipe down your pet with water immediately. If your pet ingests hand sanitizer (such as by chewing the bottle) or is showing signs of illness after use, contact your veterinarian or pet poison control immediately.

Can I take my dog to a dog park?

Dog parks provide socialization and exercise for dogs, which is an important part of their wellbeing. Because there is a risk that people with COVID-19 could spread it to animals, CDC recommends that you do not let pets interact with people outside of your household, especially in places with community spread of COVID-19. Therefore, you should consider avoiding dog parks or other places where large numbers of people and dogs gather.

Some areas are allowing dog parks to open. If you choose to go to a dog park, follow local guidelines. There are ways to reduce the risk of you or your dog getting infected with COVID-19 if you go to a dog park.

- Do not take your dog to a dog park if you are [sick](#) or if you have recently been in close contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Do not take your dog to a dog park if your dog is sick. Signs of sickness in dogs may include fever, coughing, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, lethargy, sneezing, discharge from the nose or eyes, vomiting, or diarrhea.


- If your dog has [tested positive](#) for the virus that causes COVID-19, talk to your veterinarian about when it is appropriate for your pet to go back to normal activities.
- Try to limit your dog's interaction with other people outside of your household while at the dog park.
- As much as possible, avoid touching common items in the dog park like water bowls. [Wash your hands](#) or use hand sanitizer after touching items from the park. To make sure your dog has fresh water, consider bringing your own portable water bowl.
- Limit other pet items brought to the dog park, such as toys. [Clean and disinfect](#) anything taken to the park and returned home (leashes, toys, water bowls).
- Do not wipe or bathe your dog with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners. If you have questions about appropriate products for bathing or cleaning your pet, talk to your veterinarian.

See more [information on pets and COVID-19](#) and recommendations for how to help keep your pet safe.

Can I take my dog to daycare or a groomer?

Until we know more about how this virus affects animals, CDC encourages pet owners to treat pets as you would other human family members to protect them from possible infection. This means limiting contact between your pets and people outside your household as much as possible and avoiding places where large numbers of people gather.

Some areas are allowing groomers and boarding facilities such as dog daycares to open. If you must take your pet to a groomer or boarding facility, follow any protocols put into place at the facility, such as wearing a [mask](#) and maintaining at least 6 feet of space between yourself and others if possible.

Limit pet items brought from home to the groomer or boarding facility, and disinfect any objects that are taken into a facility and returned home (such as leashes, bowls, and toys). Use an [EPA-registered disinfectant](#)  to clean items and rinse thoroughly with clean water afterwards. **Do not** wipe or bathe your pet with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners. If you have questions about appropriate products for bathing or cleaning your pet, talk to your veterinarian.

Do not put masks on pets, and do not take a sick pet to a groomer or boarding facility. Signs of sickness in dogs may include fever, coughing, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, lethargy, sneezing, discharge from the nose or eyes, vomiting, or diarrhea. If you think your pet is sick, call your veterinarian. Some veterinarians may offer telemedicine consultations or other plans for seeing sick pets. Your veterinarian can evaluate your pet and determine the next steps for your pet's treatment and care.

See more [information on pets and COVID-19](#) and recommendations for how to help keep your pet safe.

What should I do if my pet gets sick and I think it's COVID-19?

Most pets that have gotten sick from the virus that causes COVID-19 were infected after close contact with a person with COVID-19. Talk to your veterinarian about any health concerns you have about your pets.

If your pet gets sick after contact with a person with COVID-19, call your veterinarian and let them know the pet was around a person with COVID-19. If you are sick with COVID-19, do not take your pet to the veterinary clinic yourself. Some veterinarians may offer telemedicine consultations or other plans for seeing sick pets. Your veterinarian can evaluate your pet and determine the next steps for your pet's treatment and care. Routine testing of animals for COVID-19 is not recommended at this time.

What should I do if there are pets at my long-term care facility or assisted living facility?

Based on the available information to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. However, it is important that the virus that causes COVID-19 is not spread from people to animals. Stay close contact with

However, it appears that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from people to animals after close contact with people with COVID-19.

Until we learn more about how this virus affects animals, use similar precautions for pets and other animals in your facility as you would for other people in your facility. This will help protect both people and pets in your facility from COVID-19.

- Do not let pets in the facility interact with sick people.
- Pets or other animals should not be allowed to roam freely around the facility, and cats should be kept indoors.
- Residents should avoid letting their pets interact with people as much as possible.
- Dogs should be walked on a leash at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from others.
- People sick with COVID-19 should **avoid contact with pets and other animals**.
- Do not allow pets into common areas of the facility such as cafeterias and social areas.



Talk to a veterinarian [if a pet in your facility gets sick](#) or if you have any concerns about the health of any pets in the facility. If you think a pet in the facility was exposed to or is showing [signs](#) consistent with COVID-19, contact your [state health official](#) to discuss guidance on testing pets or other animals for the virus that causes COVID-19.

People who are at [higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19 should avoid providing care for sick pets, if possible.

For more information, visit CDC's [If You Have Pets](#) webpage.

Are imported animals or animal products safe?


CDC does not have any evidence to suggest that imported animals or animal products pose a risk for spreading COVID-19 in the United States. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. CDC, the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) play distinct but complementary roles in regulating the importation of live animals and animal products into the United States.

- [CDC regulates](#) animals and animal products that pose a threat to human health,
- [USDA regulates](#)  animals and animal products that pose a threat to agriculture; and
- [FWS regulates](#)  importation of endangered species and wildlife that can harm the health and welfare of humans, the interests of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, and the welfare and survival of wildlife resources.

Can I travel to the United States with dogs or import dogs into the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Beginning July 14, 2021, there is a [temporary suspension](#) for dogs imported from [countries](#) that CDC considers high risk for dog rabies. Please refer to [CDC's requirements for bringing a dog into the United States](#).

What precautions should be taken for animals that have recently been imported from outside the United States (for example, by shelters, rescues, or as personal pets)?

Imported animals will need to meet [CDC](#) and [USDA's](#)  requirements for entering the United States. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets and service animals, can spread the virus that causes COVID-19. As with any animal introduced to a new environment, animals recently imported should be observed daily for signs of illness. If an animal becomes ill, the animal should be examined by a veterinarian. Call your local veterinary clinic **before** bringing the animal into the clinic and let them know that the animal was recently imported from another country.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

Can wild animals spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to people or pets?

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest the virus that causes COVID-19 is circulating in free-living wildlife in the United States, or that wildlife might be a source of infection for people in the United States.

If a wild animal were to become infected with the virus, we don't know whether the infection could then spread among wildlife or if it could spread to other animals, including pets. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals, including wildlife, could be affected by COVID-19. Because wildlife can carry other diseases, even without looking sick, it is always important to enjoy wildlife from a distance.

Take steps to prevent getting sick from wildlife in the United States:

- Keep your family, including pets, a safe distance away from wildlife.
- Do not feed wildlife or touch wildlife droppings.
- Always wash your hands and supervise children washing their hands after working or playing outside.
- Leave orphaned animals alone. Often, the parents are close by and will return for their young.
- Consult your state wildlife agency's guidance if you are preparing or consuming legally harvested game meat.
- Do not approach or touch a sick or dead animal – contact your state wildlife agency instead.

See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.


Can bats in United States get the virus that causes COVID-19, and can they spread it back to people?

Other coronaviruses have been found in North American bats in the past, but there is currently no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 is present in any free-living wildlife in the United States, including bats. In general, coronaviruses do not cause illness or death in bats, but we don't yet know if this new coronavirus would make North American species of bats sick. Bats are an important part of natural ecosystems, and their populations are already declining in the United States. Bat populations could be further threatened by the disease itself or by harm inflicted on bats resulting from a misconception that bats are spreading COVID-19. However, there is no evidence that bats in the United States are a source of the virus that causes COVID-19 for people. Further studies are needed to understand if and how bats could be affected by COVID-19.

Is hunter-harvested game meat safe to eat during the COVID-19 pandemic?


Currently, there is no evidence that you can get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 by eating food, including wild hunted game meat. However, hunters can get infected with other diseases when processing or eating game. Hunters should always practice good hygiene when processing animals by following these food safety recommendations:

- Do not harvest animals that appear sick or are found dead.
- Keep game meat clean and cool the meat down as soon as possible after harvesting the animal.
- Avoid cutting through the backbone and spinal tissues and do not eat the brains of any wild animal.
- When handling and cleaning game:
 - Wear rubber or disposable gloves.
 - Do not eat, drink, or smoke.
- When finished handling and cleaning game:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

- Clean knives, equipment, and surfaces that were in contact with game meat with soap and water and then disinfect them. While these recommendations apply to general food safety practices, if you are concerned about COVID-19, you may use a product on the [EPA list of disinfectants for use against the COVID-19 virus](#) .
- Cook all game meat thoroughly (to an internal temperature of 165°F or higher).
- Check with your state wildlife agency regarding any testing requirements for other diseases and for any specific instructions regarding preparing, transporting, and consuming game meat.

How can I safely run my equestrian facility?

You should follow your state and/or local jurisdictional guidance regarding continuing operations at your facility. **There have not been any reports of horses testing positive for the virus that causes COVID-19.** Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person, so steps should be taken to reduce the risks for people visiting your facility.

- **Encourage employees and other visitors, including boarders, owners, farriers, veterinarians, and those taking lessons, not to enter the facility if they are sick.** Employees should not return to work until the [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#) are met, after talking with their doctor. Implement sick leave policies that are flexible, nonpunitive, and consistent with public health guidance, allowing employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- **Consider conducting daily health checks (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) of employees and others visiting the facility before they enter the premises.** People with a fever of 100.4^o(38.0^oC) or above or other [signs of illness](#) should not be admitted to the premises. If implementing health checks, conduct them safely and respectfully. See [General Business FAQs](#) for more information.
 - Employees or visitors who appear to have symptoms upon arrival or who become sick during their visit should immediately be separated from other employees and visitors and sent home.
- **Limit the number of people entering the facility.** Consider staggering lesson and visiting times to limit the number of people in the facility and potential for person-to-person contact. If possible, you can also take steps to decrease high-traffic areas by limiting areas open to visitors/owners or staggering use of common areas like grooming or wash stalls and tack rooms.
- **Increase distance and limit duration of contact between employees and visitors in the facility.** Whenever possible, people should maintain at least 6 feet of distance between each other at the facility, including instructors teaching lessons. Allow for [social distancing](#) and avoid large numbers of people within the facility, including in employee-only areas.
- **Visitors and employees should wear masks** especially where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Masks offer some protection to the wearer and are also meant to protect those around the wearer, in case they are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Wearing a mask does NOT replace the need to practice social distancing.
- **Set up hand hygiene stations** at the entrance and within the facility, so that employees and people entering can clean their hands before they enter. Employees should [wash hands](#) regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol can be used, but if hands are visibly dirty, they should be washed with soap and water before using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Examples of hand hygiene stations may be a hose and soap located at entrances to allow for handwashing before entry.
- Cleaning high touch surfaces and shared objects once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces unless someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 has been in the equestrian facility. Disinfecting (using disinfectants on [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)'s List N](#) ) removes any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection. For more information on cleaning regularly and cleaning when someone is sick, see [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).
- **Follow local guidance** on shelter in place and travel recommendations when traveling for showing, training, or trail riding.
- If traveling to a new facility, **limit contact between people, horses, tack, equipment, and other supplies** from different facilities, and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between horses and riders.
 - Follow state and local guidance on travel. People who are sick should not travel to other facilities.

- People visiting other facilities should follow the same precautions as they would normally, including maintaining at least 6 feet of distance between each other, wearing a mask to protect others, and washing hands frequently with soap and water.
- If other animals, such as barn cats, are present at the facility, be aware that a small number of [pets](#) have been reported to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after contact with people with COVID-19.

For more information, see [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) [35 pages, 1.4mb] and [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

Can the virus that causes COVID-19 get back into the environment from wastewater and infect wildlife?

SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) can be shed in the feces of people with COVID-19. Genetic material from SARS-CoV-2 has been found in [untreated wastewater](#). However, while data are limited, there is little evidence of infectious virus in wastewater, and no information to date that anyone has become sick with COVID-19 because of exposure to wastewater. It is possible that wildlife could become infected with SARS-CoV-2 from contact with untreated wastewater, but evidence from studies of virus infectivity in feces and survival in wastewater suggests that this transmission route is unlikely to occur.

See also: [Pets and Other Animals](#)

Community Mitigation

What is community mitigation?

Community mitigation is a set of actions that people and communities can take to slow the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19. The goal of community mitigation in areas with local COVID-19 transmission is to slow its spread and to protect all individuals, especially those at [increased risk for severe illness](#), while minimizing the negative impacts of these strategies. For more information, see [Community Mitigation Framework](#).

What are community mitigation actions for COVID-19?

There are several actions that individuals and communities can take to help reduce the chance that they, their families and friends, and their communities get COVID-19. In general, the more cases spreading in your community, the more likely it will spread to you or your family. Also, the more people an individual interacts with, and the longer each interaction lasts, the higher the risk of viral spread. Location can be a factor, too, with outdoor activities generally being less risky than indoor activities.

Individuals can take the following community mitigation actions:

- [Wear](#) a mask (with some exceptions) when in public settings or around others not living in the same household
- Follow [healthy hygiene practices](#), such as frequent hand washing
- Practice [social distancing](#)
- Stay home when sick
- Clean frequently touched surfaces daily

Communities can take the following actions:

- Promote behaviors that prevent spread
- Maintain healthy environments
- Ensure institutions in the community are practicing appropriate precautions
- Prepare for when someone gets sick
- Close businesses and schools, and limit other services

For more information, see [Community Guidance](#), [Community Mitigation](#), and [Community Mitigation Framework](#).

Food and Water

Can I get COVID-19 from food (including restaurant take-out, produce, refrigerated, or packaged food) or drinking water? 

Currently there is no evidence that people can get COVID-19 by eating or handling food.

It may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, such as a food package or dining ware that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Follow [food safety guidelines](#) when handling and cleaning fresh produce. Do not wash produce with soap, bleach, sanitizer, alcohol, disinfectant or any other chemical.

There is also no current evidence that people can get COVID-19 by drinking water. The COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking water. Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, such as those in most municipal drinking water systems, should remove or kill the virus that causes COVID-19. Learn more about [food and COVID-19](#).


Can the virus that causes COVID-19 spread through treated drinking water? 

The virus that causes COVID-19 has not been detected in treated drinking water. Water treatment plants use filters and disinfectants to remove or kill germs, like the virus that causes COVID-19. The Environmental Protection Agency regulates water treatment plants to ensure that treated water is safe to drink.

Currently, there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to people by drinking treated water. COVID-19 is spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person. You can continue to use and drink water from your tap as usual.


Is the virus that causes COVID-19 found in feces (stool)? 

The virus that causes COVID-19 has been found in the feces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19. However, it is unclear whether the virus found in feces may be capable of causing COVID-19. There has not been any confirmed report of the virus spreading from feces to a person. Scientists also do not know how much risk there is that the virus could be spread from the feces of an infected person to another person. However, they think this risk is low based on data from previous pandemics of diseases caused by related coronaviruses, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

Can the COVID-19 virus spread through wastewater systems? 

SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) can be shed in the feces of individuals with COVID-19. Genetic material

from SARS-CoV-2 has been found in [untreated wastewater](#). However, while data are limited, there is little evidence of infectious virus in wastewater, and no information to date that anyone has become sick with COVID-19 because of exposure to wastewater. Wastewater treatment plants use chemical and other disinfection processes to remove and degrade many viruses and bacteria. SARS-CoV-2 is inactivated by the disinfection methods used in wastewater treatment. At this time, the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 through properly designed and maintained wastewater systems is thought to be low.

Should wastewater workers take extra precautions to protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19? 


Recently, ribonucleic acid (RNA) from the virus that causes COVID-19 has been found in untreated wastewater. While data are limited, there is little evidence of infectious virus in wastewater, and no information to date that anyone has become sick with COVID-19 because of exposure to wastewater.

Standard practices associated with wastewater treatment plant operations should be sufficient to protect wastewater workers from the virus that causes COVID-19. These standard practices can include engineering and administrative controls, hygiene precautions, specific safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) normally required when handling untreated wastewater. No additional COVID-19-specific protections are recommended for workers involved in wastewater management, including those at wastewater treatment facilities.

[See Information for Wastewater and Sanitation System Workers on COVID-19](#) for additional information.

If my utility has issued a Boil Water Advisory, can I still use tap water to wash my hands? 


In most cases, it is safe to [wash your hands](#) with soap and tap water during a [Boil Water Advisory](#). Follow the guidance from your local public health officials. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Can the virus that causes COVID-19 spread to people through floodwater? 

There is [no evidence that COVID-19 can spread to people through water](#), including floodwater.

Sometimes floodwater can mix with [wastewater](#). CDC is not aware of any scientific reports of the virus being spread by swallowing or coming in contact with water contaminated by feces from an infected person. Stay out of floodwater to [avoid hazards and illnesses](#) from contaminants that are not associated with COVID-19. To learn more about COVID-19 and wastewater, see question, “[Can the COVID-19 virus spread through sewerage systems?](#)”

Pools and Beaches

Can the virus that causes COVID-19 spread to people in the water we swim, play, and relax in? 



CDC is not aware of any scientific reports of the virus that causes COVID-19 spreading to people through the water we swim, play, or relax in. This includes fresh and marine water (such as lakes, rivers, ponds, and oceans) and water in pools, hot tubs, or water playgrounds. Plus proper disinfection of the water (with chlorine or bromine) in pools, hot

tubs, and water playgrounds should inactivate the virus. In saltwater pools, table salt (made up of sodium and chloride) is added to the water, and an electrical current is then run through the water. This creates the same disinfecting form of chlorine that is created when chlorine products are added to the water in traditional pools.

Other Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About:

- Vaccines
- Travel
- Healthcare Professionals
- Healthcare Infection
- Laboratory Viral Panels
- Laboratory Biosafety
- General Business
- Personal Protective Equipment
- K-12 Schools and Child Care Program Administrators
- Retirement Communities and Independent Living Facilities
- Correctional and Detention Facilities
- Event Organizers & Individuals
- Funeral Home Workers
- HIV
- Liver Disease

Help control the spread of rumors and be aware of fraud schemes.

- [Coronavirus Rumor Control](#)  (FEMA)
- [COVID-19 Fraud Alert](#)  (Office of the Inspector General)

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