

For People Living in Prisons and Jails

Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/living-prisons-jails.html>

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that spreads¹ easily from person to person. It is important to protect yourself² from getting COVID-19 because it can make you very sick.*

Living in prisons and jails puts you at higher risk for getting COVID-19 because:

- It may be hard to stay at least 6 feet³ away (2 arm lengths), also called physical distancing, from other people.
- There may not be enough space to keep people with COVID-19 away from others.
- You may be sharing space with someone who has the virus and does not know it, because they are not coughing or showing other symptoms.
- Staff or visitors may have the virus and not know it.

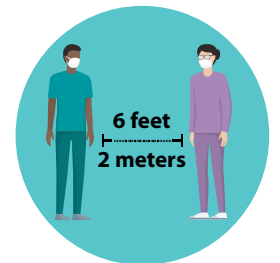
About COVID-19

- Many people who have COVID-19 do not feel sick.
- For those who do feel sick, some signs and symptoms of COVID-19⁴ include:
 - » Fever/chills
 - » New loss of taste or smell
 - » Coughing
 - » Sore throat
 - » Feeling tired
 - » Stuffy or runny nose
 - » Having a hard time breathing
 - » Nausea/vomiting
 - » Pain in the head or body
 - » Diarrhea

We need to do all of these things to beat COVID-19.



Wear a mask



Physically distance as much as possible



Wash your hands



Get a vaccine



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

How COVID-19 Spreads

If physical distancing is not maintained, the virus may spread¹ when a person with COVID-19 breathes, coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings.

- Droplets are formed when you breathe. These droplets can contain the virus. If people nearby breathe in the droplets, then they can get infected.
- Sometimes, droplets can stay in the air for minutes to hours and infect someone more than 6 feet away.
- Less commonly, people may get infected by the virus by touching something with the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

People at Risk For COVID-19

- Anyone can get infected.
- Older adults⁵ and people with certain health issues⁶ tend to get sicker with COVID-19. Some of these issues include:
 - » Cancer
 - » Chronic kidney disease
 - » Chronic liver disease
 - » COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - » Down syndrome
 - » Heart problems
 - » Obesity
 - » Pregnancy
 - » Sickle cell disease
 - » Smoking
 - » Type 2 diabetes
 - » Weakened immune system from solid organ transplant

If you have any of these health issues, it is more important than ever to protect yourself and get the COVID-19 vaccine⁷ when it is available to you.

Protect Yourself and Others

- Vaccines may keep you from getting sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19. Get a vaccine⁷ as soon as you can!
- Maintaining physical distance can protect you from different types of COVID-19 (e.g., Delta).
 - » Avoid crowds as much as possible, and try to distance yourself as much as possible.
 - Recreation, especially when inside
 - Mealtime (if in a dining area with people from other units)
 - Walking in hallways
- Wear a mask⁸ that covers your nose and mouth, especially when around staff or people from a different housing unit.
 - » After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- Always wash your hands⁹ with soap and water for at least 20 seconds^{**}:
 - » After touching your mask
 - » Before touching your face
 - » After using the bathroom
 - » Before eating
 - » Before and after making food
 - » Before taking medicine

Common Spaces

- Go outside for your recreation time if you can.
- Sleep head to foot if there is more than one bed in a room. This gives you more space between your face and others around you.
- If visitors are allowed, visitors may be screened for COVID-19 and asked to wear a mask.
 - » Visitors may not be able to enter the building if they do not clear the screening process (for example, a temperature check), or if they decline to be screened.

If You Were Near Someone with COVID-19

- You may be tested for the virus even if you do not feel sick.
- You may be sent to an area away from others. This is called quarantine.
 - » Quarantine separates people who were exposed to COVID-19 to see if they become sick.
 - » This room may be a single cell or a large area with others.
 - » Quarantine helps protect you from getting or spreading the virus to others.

What to Do if You Feel Sick

- Tell a correctional officer or staff member if you feel sick so you can get medical care.
- You may be sent to an area by yourself. This is called medical isolation.
 - » Medical isolation separates people who may have COVID-19 from people who are not sick. This is so you don't get others sick.
 - » This room may be a single cell or a large area with others who are also sick.
 - » Medical isolation is *not* to punish you.
- You may be tested for COVID-19.
 - » If your test is positive, showing you have COVID-19, you will need to stay in medical isolation for at least 10 days.
 - » If your test is negative, but you were near someone with COVID-19, you may be sent to a quarantine area to see if you develop COVID-19.
 - A negative test result means that you probably did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing or that it was too early in your infection.
 - You could be exposed to COVID-19 after being tested.
 - You may be tested again.

Resources

- Visit CDC's "How to Protect Yourself & Others"² webpage for more information on the important ways to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- It is natural to feel stress, grief and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Refer to CDC's "Coping with Stress"¹⁰ webpage for more details on how you can help yourself and others manage stress.

* This webpage contains recommendations for people in prisons and jails. CDC acknowledges it may be difficult to maintain physical distancing and avoid crowds in these settings.

** If available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not immediately available.²

References:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>
6. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>
7. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
8. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>
9. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
10. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>