

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Get Ready for COVID-19

Take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick

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If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-

term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

- Stock up on supplies.
- **Take everyday precautions** to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- **Avoid crowds** as much as possible.
- **Avoid cruise travel** and non-essential air travel.
- **During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home** as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.

## Have supplies on hand

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- **Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications** to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications.
- **Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies** (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
- **Have enough household items and groceries** on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time.

**See also:** [Get Your Home Ready](#)

## Take everyday precautions





Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Take everyday preventive actions:

- Clean your hands often
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places** – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.
- Wash your hands after touching surfaces in public places.
- **Avoid touching your face**, nose, eyes, etc.
- **Clean and disinfect** your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks & cell phones)
- **Avoid crowds**, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Your risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are people in the crowd who are sick.
- **Avoid all non-essential travel** including plane trips, and especially avoid embarking on [cruise ships](#).

See also: [Protect Yourself](#)

## If COVID-19 is spreading in your community





Take extra measures to put distance between yourself and other people to further reduce your risk of being exposed to this new virus.

- **Stay home** as much as possible.
- **Consider ways of getting food brought to your house** through family, social, or commercial networks

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. (An outbreak is when a large number of people suddenly get sick.) Depending on how severe the outbreak is, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce people's risk of being exposed to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease.



## Have a plan for if you get sick



- **Consult with your health care provider** for more information about [monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19](#).
- **Stay in touch with others by phone or email.** You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, or community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
- **Determine who can care for you** if your caregiver gets sick.

Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs

- **Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms** including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
- **If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately.** In adults, emergency warning signs\*:
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - 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.

## What to do if you get sick

- **Stay home and call your doctor.**
- Call your healthcare provider and let them know about your symptoms. Tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help them take care of you and keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home. Follow CDC instructions for [how to take care of yourself at home](#).
- Know when to get emergency help.
- Get medical attention immediately if you have any of the emergency warning signs listed above.

**See also:** [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)

## What others can do to support older adults

### Community support for older adults

- Community preparedness planning for COVID-19 should include older adults and people with disabilities, and the organizations that support them in their communities, to ensure their needs are taken into consideration.
  - Many of these individuals live in the community, and many depend on services and supports provided in their homes or in the community to maintain their health and independence.
- **Long-term care facilities should be vigilant** to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. [Information for long-term care facilities can be found here](#).

### Family and caregiver support

- **Know what medications your loved one is taking** and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- **Monitor food and other medical supplies** (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan.

- **Stock up on non-perishable food** to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.