



Coronavirus Disease 2019

People with Disabilities

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

Disability alone may not be related to higher risk for getting COVID-19 or having severe illness. Most people with disabilities are not inherently at higher risk for becoming infected with or having severe illness from COVID-19. However, some people with disabilities might be at a higher risk of infection or severe illness because of their underlying medical conditions. All people seem to be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 if they have serious [underlying chronic medical conditions](#) like chronic lung disease, a serious heart condition, or a weakened immune system. Adults with disabilities are three times more likely than adults without disabilities to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer than adults without disabilities.

You should talk with your healthcare provider if you have a question about your health or how your health condition is being managed.

Disability Groups and Risk

If you have one of the disability types listed below, you might be at increased risk of becoming infected or having unrecognized illness. You should discuss your risk of illness with your healthcare provider.

- People who have limited mobility or who cannot avoid coming into close contact with others who may be infected, such as direct support providers and family members
- People who have trouble understanding information or practicing preventive measures, such as hand washing and social distancing
- People who may not be able to communicate symptoms of illness

Protect Yourself

If you or someone you care for are at [higher risk](#) of getting very sick from COVID-19, [take steps to prevent getting sick](#). In addition to practicing everyday preventive actions, people with disabilities who have direct support providers can help protect themselves from respiratory illness in the following ways:


- Ask your direct support provider if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19
- Tell your direct service provider to
 - Wash their hands when they enter your home and before and after touching you (e.g., dressing, bathing/showering, transferring, toileting, feeding), handling tissues, or when changing linens or doing laundry. [Learn more about proper handwashing](#).
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g., counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, bedside tables), and equipment such as wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, oxygen tanks and tubing, communication boards and other assistive devices. Refer to [CDC's General Recommendations for Routine Cleaning and Disinfections of Households](#).

Prepare

There are some additional things people with disabilities can do to prepare during the COVID-19 outbreak:

- Plan what you will do if you or your direct support provider gets sick. Create a contact list of family, friends, neighbors and local service agencies that can provide support in case [you or your direct support provider becomes ill](#) or unavailable.
- Plan at least two ways of communicating from home and work that can be used rapidly in an emergency (e.g., landline phone, cell phone, text-messaging, email). Write down this information and keep it with you.
- Have enough household items and groceries so that you will be comfortable staying home for a few weeks, at least a 30-day supply of over the counter and prescription medicines and any medical equipment or supplies that you might need. Some health plans allow for a 90-day refill on prescription medications. Consider discussing this option with your healthcare provider. Make a photocopy of prescriptions, as this may help in obtaining medications in an emergency situation.

About COVID-19

- Coronavirus disease is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also 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 eyes. For more information go to CDC's Fact Sheet- [What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)  .
- Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19, such as healthcare workers, direct support providers, and household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Prevention and Treatment

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to [take everyday preventive actions](#), like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often. There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. [People with COVID-19](#) can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

More Information

[People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions](#)

[People who are at higher risk for severe illness](#)

[Other At-Risk Populations](#)

[Symptoms & Testing](#)

[If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone](#)

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