



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



## People with Moderate to Severe Asthma

Updated Aug. 27, 2020 [Print](#)

This information is based on what we currently know about the spread and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

### Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19

People with moderate to severe asthma may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. COVID-19 can affect your nose, throat, lungs (respiratory tract); cause an asthma attack; and possibly lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory disease.

### Treatment

There is currently no preventive treatment or vaccine for COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19.

### Prepare for COVID-19

- Make sure that you have at least a 30-day supply of your [medicines](#).
- Take [everyday precautions](#) like washing your hands, avoiding close contact and [staying at least 6 feet \(about 2 arms' length\) from other people](#).
- [Wear masks](#) in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household.
- When out in public, keep away from others and [avoid crowds](#).
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid [cruise travel](#) and non-essential air [travel](#).
- During a COVID-19 spread (outbreak) in your community, [stay home](#) as much as possible to reduce your risk of being exposed.
- [If someone in your home is sick](#), have them stay away from the rest of the household to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in your home.

### Follow your Asthma Action Plan

- Keep your asthma under control by following [your asthma action plan](#).
- Avoid your [asthma triggers](#).
- Continue current medications, including any inhalers with steroids in them ("steroids" is another word for corticosteroids). [Know how to use your inhaler](#).
- Do not stop any medications or change your asthma treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider.
- Talk to your healthcare provider, insurer, and pharmacist about creating an emergency supply of prescription medications, such as asthma inhalers. Make sure that you have 30 days of non-prescription medications and [supplies](#) on hand in case you need to stay home for a long time.
- [Take steps to help yourself cope with stress and anxiety](#).
- As more cases of COVID-19 are discovered and our communities take action to combat the spread of disease, it is natural for some people to feel concerned or stressed. Strong emotions can trigger an asthma attack.
- For information on administering asthma medication in schools, visit [K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#).

## Any disinfectant can trigger an asthma attack.

### Follow the recommendations below to reduce your chance of an asthma attack while disinfecting to prevent COVID-19.

- **If you have asthma,**
  - Ask an adult without asthma to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects for you.
  - Stay in another room when cleaners or disinfectants are being used and right after their use.
  - Use only cleaning products you must use. Some surfaces and objects that are seldom touched may need to be cleaned only with soap and water.
  - Make a list of the urgent care or health facilities near you that provide nebulizer/asthma treatments. Keep it close to your phone
  - If you have an asthma attack, move away from the trigger such as the disinfectant or the area that was disinfected. Follow your [Asthma Action Plan](#). Call 911 for medical emergencies.
- **The person cleaning and disinfecting should:**
  - Follow [recommendations](#) for cleaning and disinfecting to prevent COVID-19.
  - Choose disinfectants that are less likely to cause an asthma attack, using [EPA's list of approved products](#) [🔗](#) such as:
    - products with hydrogen peroxide (no stronger than 3%) or ethanol (ethyl alcohol)
    - products that do **NOT** contain peroxyacetic acid or peracetic acid.
  - Limit use of chemicals that can trigger asthma attacks, such as bleach (sodium

hypochlorite) or quaternary ammonium compounds (e.g. benzalkonium chloride), and do not use them in enclosed spaces.

- Follow [additional precautions](#) for cleaning and disinfecting places where people with asthma may be, to reduce exposure to asthma triggers.
- **Use products safely and correctly:**
  - Always read and follow the directions on the product label to ensure you are using it safely and effectively.
  - Wear skin protection such as gloves and consider eye protection to protect yourself against splashes.
  - Make sure there is enough air flow (ventilation).
  - Use only the amount recommended on the label.
  - Use water at room temperature for dilution (unless stated otherwise on the label).
  - Do **NOT** mix chemical products. Label diluted cleaning solutions.
- **Store products safely and correctly**
  - Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.
  - Label diluted cleaning solutions.
  - Follow [EPA's 6 steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use](#) [↗](#) .

## If you feel ill

Contact your health care provider to ask about your symptoms. **If you don't have a healthcare provider**, contact your nearest [community health center](#) [↗](#) or [health department](#). Remember to call 911 for medical emergencies.

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), Division of Viral Diseases