

CDC Recommendations - Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

Follow the steps below: [If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have COVID-19](#), follow the steps below to care for yourself and to help protect other people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

- **Stay home.** Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- **Take care of yourself.** Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you have trouble breathing, or have any other [emergency warning signs](#), or if you think it is an [emergency](#).
- **Avoid public transportation**, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people

As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people and pets in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.

- Additional guidance is available for those living in [close quarters](#) and [shared housing](#).
- See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) if you have questions about pets.

Monitor your symptoms

- **[Symptoms](#) of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath but other symptoms may be present as well.** Trouble breathing is a more serious symptom that means you should get medical attention.
- **Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department.** Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

When to Seek Medical Attention

If you have any of these **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately:**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*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 if you have a medical emergency: Notify the operator that you have, or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

- **Call ahead.** Many medical visits for routine care are being postponed or done by phone or telemedicine.
- **If you have a medical appointment that cannot be postponed, call your doctor's office,** and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.

If you are sick wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth

- **You should wear a [cloth face covering](#), over your nose and mouth** if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home)
- You don't need to wear the cloth face covering if you are alone. If you can't put on a cloth face covering (because of trouble breathing, for example), cover your coughs and sneezes in some other way. **Try to stay at least 6 feet away from other people.** This will help protect the people around you.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2 years, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is not able to remove the covering without help.

Note: During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical grade facemasks are reserved for healthcare workers and some first responders. You may need to make a cloth face covering using a scarf or bandana.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Throw away used tissues** in a lined trash can.
- **Immediately wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Use hand sanitizer** if soap and water are not available. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Soap and water** are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

- **Do not share** dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.
- **Wash these items thoroughly after using them** with soap and water or put in the dishwasher.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday

- **Clean and disinfect** high-touch surfaces in your “sick room” and bathroom; wear disposable gloves. Let someone else clean and disinfect surfaces in common areas, but you should clean your bedroom and bathroom, if possible.
- **If a caregiver or other person needs to clean and disinfect** a sick person’s bedroom or bathroom, they should do so on an as-needed basis. The caregiver/other person should wear a mask and disposable gloves prior to cleaning. They should wait as long as possible after the person who is sick has used the bathroom before coming in to clean and use the bathroom.

High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.

- **Clean and disinfect areas that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.**
- **Use household cleaners and disinfectants.** Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant.
 - Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for several minutes to ensure germs are killed. Many also recommend precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
 - Most EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A full list of disinfectants can be found [hereexternal icon](#).

How to discontinue home isolation

People with COVID-19 who have stayed home (home isolated) can leave home under the following conditions**:

- **If you have not had a test** to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:
 - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever **without** the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
AND
 - other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
AND
 - at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared
- **If you have had a test** to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:
 - You no longer have a fever (**without** the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
AND
 - other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
AND

- you received two negative tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow [CDC guidelines](#).

People who DID NOT have COVID-19 symptoms, but tested positive and have stayed home (home isolated) can leave home under the following conditions:**

- **If you have not had a test** to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these two things have happened:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive test
AND
 - you continue to have no symptoms (no cough or shortness of breath) since the test.
- **If you have had a test** to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after:
 - You received two negative tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow [CDC guidelines](#).

Note: if you develop symptoms, follow guidance above for people with COVID19 symptoms.

In all cases, **follow the guidance of your doctor and local health department. The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your healthcare provider and state and local health departments. Some people, for example those with conditions that [weaken their immune system](#), might continue to shed virus even after they recover.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>