

TIP SHEET: IF YOU ARE SICK WITH CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

If you have a fever, cough or [other symptoms](#), you might have COVID-19. Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home. If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider.

- Keep track of your symptoms.
- **If you have [an emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing),** get emergency medical care immediately.

STAY HOME UNLESS GETTING 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 AND PETS IN YOUR HOME

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 mask.

Tell your [close contacts](#) that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. By letting your close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect everyone.

- Additional guidance is available for those living in [close quarters](#) and [shared housing](#).
- See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) if you have questions about pets.
- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you. [Answer the call](#) to slow the spread.

MONITOR YOUR SYMPTOMS

- **[Symptoms](#) of COVID-19 include fever, cough, or other symptoms.**
- **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 EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Look for **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately:**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

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- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- 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 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE VISITING THEIR OFFICE

Before your medical appointment, call the health care provider and tell them that you have, or may have, COVID-19 infection. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

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.

WEAR A FACEMASK

- **You should wear a [mask](#) 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 mask if you are alone. If you can't put on a mask (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.
- Masks 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 mask without help.

Note: During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical grade facemasks are reserved for healthcare workers and some first responders.

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

- **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.

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- **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

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water or put in the dishwasher.

CLEAN ALL “HIGH-TOUCH” SURFACES DAILY IN YOUR HOME

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

- **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.
- **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 [here](#).
 - [Complete Disinfection Guidance](#)

WHEN TO DISCONTINUE HOME ISOLATION

You can be around others after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving*

**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation*

Most people do not require testing to decide when they can be around others; however, if your healthcare provider recommends testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your test results.

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People who are severely ill with COVID-19 might need to stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appeared. [Persons who are severely immunocompromised](#) may require testing to determine when they can be around others. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information. If testing is available in your community, it may be recommended by your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will let you know if you can resume being around other people based on the results of your testing.

Your doctor may work with [an infectious disease expert or your local health department](#) to determine whether testing will be necessary before you can be around others.

IS REINFECTION POSSIBLE?

[Cases of reinfection](#) of COVID-19 have been reported but are rare. In general, reinfection means a person was infected (got sick) once, recovered, and then later became infected again. Based on what we know from similar viruses, some reinfections are expected.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases. Retrieved November 12, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov>