

TIP SHEET: CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, including:

- **Inside of your home:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- **Outside of your home:** Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
 - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
 - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
 - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and immediately wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- To reduce the spread of COVID-19, people should wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
 - Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.
 - Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing:
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
 - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Monitor your health.
 - **Be alert for symptoms.** Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
 - **Take your temperature if symptoms develop.**
 - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.

TREATMENT FOR COVID-19

Any treatments that are used for COVID-19 should be taken under the care of a healthcare provider. People have been [seriously harmed and even died](#) after taking unapproved products to self-treat.

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The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has developed and regularly updates [Treatment Guidelines](#) to help guide healthcare providers caring for patients with COVID-19, including when clinicians might consider using one of the products under an EUA. Currently, there are several approaches for treating patients with severe COVID-19 who are being cared for in the hospital. In studies, some drugs have shown some benefit in reducing the severity of illness or risk of death by:

- *Slowing the virus.* Antiviral medications reduce the ability of the virus to multiply and spread through the body.
 - [Remdesivir](#) (Veklury) is an antiviral medication approved by the FDA to treat COVID-19, that is recommended in the current [NIH Treatment Guidelines](#) for certain patients who are hospitalized with COVID-19. Remdesivir is given to patients by infusion through their veins.
- *Reducing an overactive immune response.* In patients with severe COVID-19, the body's immune system may overreact to the threat of the virus, worsening the disease. This can cause damage to the body's organs and tissues. Some treatments can help reduce this overactive immune response.
 - [Dexamethasone](#) is a steroid medication, similar to a natural hormone produced by the body. The [NIH Treatment Guidelines](#) recommend dexamethasone, or a similar medication, to prevent or reduce injury to the body for some hospitalized patients with severe COVID-19. Dexamethasone is recommended for patients who need supplemental oxygen.
- *Treating complications.* The virus that causes COVID-19 can damage the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, and gastrointestinal organs. It also can cause other complications. Depending on the complications, additional treatments might be used for severely ill hospitalized patients, such as blood thinners to prevent or treat blood clots.
- *Supporting the body's immune function.* Antibodies from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 (convalescent plasma) or antibodies manufactured to treat COVID-19 (like monoclonal antibodies) can attach to parts of the virus. This could help the immune system recognize and respond more effectively to the virus, but currently the [NIH Treatment Guidelines](#) find there is not enough evidence to recommend these treatments.
- *Relieving symptoms and supporting the body's natural defenses.*
 - Taking medications, like acetaminophen or ibuprofen, can reduce fever.
 - Drinking water or receiving intravenous fluids can help patients stay hydrated.
 - Getting plenty of rest can help the body fight the virus.

Other products are being studied as potential treatments for COVID-19. Information about these ongoing studies can be found at [ClinicalTrials.gov](#).

HOW TO PROTECT OTHERS

[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.

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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 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.

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 MASK OVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH

- **You should wear a [mask](#) over your nose and mouth** if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home).
 - Wash your hands before putting on your mask
 - Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
 - Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Don't put the mask around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the mask, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect
- 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.

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

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases. (Revised 2020, November 4). Retrieved November 12, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov>