

# Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

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

If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have COVID-19, follow the steps below 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 are able to 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.
- **Get medical care when needed.** Call your doctor before you go to their office for care. But, if you have trouble breathing or other concerning symptoms, call 911 for immediate help.
- **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. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.
  - See COVID-19 and Animals if you have questions about pets: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#COVID19animals>



## Monitor your symptoms.

- **Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever and cough.** 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 will give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.



If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately.**

Emergency warning signs include\*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or not able to be woken
- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

**Call 911 if you have a medical emergency.** If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the operator that you have or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask 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.** 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.



**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.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Throw 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 your 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 them in the dishwasher.



## Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday.

- **Clean and disinfect** high-touch surfaces in your “sick room” and bathroom. Let someone else clean and disinfect surfaces in common areas, but not your bedroom and bathroom.
- **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 wait as long as possible after the sick person has used 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.

## How to discontinue home isolation

- People **with COVID-19 who have stayed home (home isolated)** can stop home isolation under the following conditions:
  - **If you will not have 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 has improved)AND
    - at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
  - **If you will be tested** 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 has improved)AND
    - you received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow CDC guidelines.



**In all cases, follow the guidance of your healthcare provider 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. Local decisions depend on local circumstances.