COVID-19 (Coronavirus): What To Know And Where To Go

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

What are the symptoms?
Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and shortness of breath. Severe complications have included pneumonia (infection of the lungs). Symptoms usually appear 2–14 days after exposure.

I'm sick, or my child is sick. How do I know if it is COVID-19?
COVID-19 symptoms can be similar to other respiratory illnesses like the flu. If you have concerns, contact your primary health care provider or your child's pediatrician.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?
The first step is to call your primary health care provider for guidance on appropriate testing and care.

Can I request to be tested?
Not directly. Testing is at the discretion of the health care provider, following CDC guidelines and protocols. If you suspect you have symptoms of coronavirus, please call your provider as soon as possible.

How would I be tested for COVID-19?
If you present appropriate symptoms, your provider will work with state and local health departments and CDC to determine if you should be tested for COVID-19.

If I'm tested and the result is negative, could I still test positive for COVID-19 later?
Using a CDC-developed diagnostic test, a negative result means the virus that causes COVID-19 was not found. In the early stages of infection, it is possible the virus could not be detected. A negative test result while a person has symptoms likely means that the COVID-19 virus is not causing their current illness.

Am I at risk of getting COVID-19?
The situation continues to change every day. If you have a respiratory illness with a fever, cough or shortness of breath, and have recently traveled internationally or have had close contact with someone who traveled internationally and is now sick, please call your provider. We recommend you stay up to date with local and national public health alerts.

What if my child came in contact with a person who is sick?
If your child begins to show signs and symptoms of a respiratory illness after coming in contact with a person that is sick, you should reach out to your primary health care provider.

Should my child go to school or daycare if they are sick?
Children should stay home if they are sick.

If I have COVID-19, can it be treated?
There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

How can I protect myself?
The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. CDC recommends:
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Only wear a facemask if a health care professional recommends it. People who have COVID-19 should use a facemask to protect others from risk of infection.
How to Protect Yourself from the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

It is important that you and your family protect yourselves from COVID-19. The best way to prevent this disease is to avoid exposure to the virus.

How can I avoid exposure to COVID-19?

- **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**
  - You can hum or sing the birthday song twice while you wash your hands.
- If you don’t have soap, then be sure to use hand sanitizer that has at least **60% alcohol**.
- Don’t touch your eyes, nose, or mouth before you wash your hands.
- Try to stay at least 6 feet away from people.
- Go out in public only if necessary (like going grocery shopping or buying other basic needs).
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch every day (like cell phones, tables, remote controls, keys, doorknobs, and light switches).
- Throw away all of your used tissues in the garbage right away.
- It is **NOT necessary** to use a mask if you do not have symptoms. However, if you are taking care of someone who is sick, wear a mask.

What should I do if I am sick?

- **If you have difficulty breathing, call 911 right away.**
- If you have other symptoms, consult with your doctor (call or see if you can message them online).
- Wear a face mask.
- Stay at home to avoid infecting other people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze.
  - You can use the inner part of your elbow if you do not have a tissue.
- If you have a family member who is sick, they should occupy a separate room apart from other family members and pets to avoid spreading the virus. If it is not possible for the person who is sick to have their own room or bathroom, they should stay at least 6 feet away from those who are not sick. The bathroom should be disinfected after every use.

What should I do if I am undocumented?

- The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will not consider the testing, treatment, or preventative care of the Coronavirus in the public charge test.
- **If you are sick, take care of yourself and seek medical attention if needed.**
How can I manage my mental and physical health while I am at home?

- **Take a break** - Take a break from watching, reading, or listening to the news (including on social media). Constantly listening to the news about the pandemic can cause more stress and anxiety.

- **Maintain a routine** - Try to maintain a daily routine. For example, you can create a schedule for your child(ren) including learning activities and fun/relaxing activities (like listening to music, watching a movie, or praying if you are religious). If you are at home, start your day at the same time you would normally start work, and end your work day when you would normally leave work.

- **Connect with family and/or friends** - Talk with a friend and/or family member and share your feelings and concerns. Create a strong support system because we are all living through this difficult time.

- **Take care of your body** - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat a balanced and healthy diet, exercise from home regularly, sleep well, and avoid consuming drugs and alcohol.

What can I do at home?

- Play board games and card games (bingo, dominos, loteria, etc.)
- Cook and eat with your family
- Tell stories
- Look at family photos
- Look up exercise videos on YouTube (such as yoga or zumba) that you can do from home
- Read, draw, write, or color
- Organize and clean your house - get a jump start on your spring cleaning
- Call your loved ones or connect via social media
- Listen and/or dance to music
- Participate in religious services that are offered on YouTube or Facebook Live
- Pray if you are religious

Also, you can do the following activities*:

- Walk your dog around the block
- Run or exercise around your neighborhood

*Please follow all recommendations provided by state and local authorities and keep your distance from others. For example, "Shelter in Place" still allows you to go to the grocery store to buy food, go to the pharmacy, take a short walk, or leave your home for medical reasons.

Information from this fact sheet was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): https://www-cdc.gov.proxy.cc.uic.edu/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html