

# COVID-19: What to do if you have confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease 2019

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If you are sick and have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected to have COVID-19 because you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

## Symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and difficulty breathing. If you have been exposed to someone with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 and are experiencing fever with either cough or difficulty breathing, you might have COVID-19. You can contact your doctor to see if you need to be tested. If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are suspected to have COVID-19 but are not tested, you should follow the below instructions.

## Who is at higher risk of severe illness?

Those at higher risk include:

- People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
- People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

## Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

## Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.

## Call ahead before visiting your doctor

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

## Wear a face mask

You should wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a face mask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you, or they should wear a face mask if they enter your room.

## 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 or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty.

## Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

*This version was released on 03/15/2020. It may be updated with new guidance.  
Please visit [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus) to find the latest version.*

### Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often 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, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

### Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

### Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department to discuss your situation.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or may have COVID-19. If possible, put on a face mask before emergency medical services arrive.

### Discontinuing home isolation

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and do not require medical attention, you should remain under home isolation precautions for 7 days from start of symptoms (if multiple symptoms, then from start of cough) OR until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms get better, whichever is longer.

If you have fever with cough or difficulty breathing but have NOT been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have NOT tested positive for COVID-19, you should stay home away from others until 72 hours after the fever is gone and symptoms get better.

For additional information for your household members, intimate partners, and caregivers, see CDC’s [Guidance for preventing COVID-19 from spreading](#).