

How to Care for Someone at Home During COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Caring for someone at home

Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild illness and should recover at home. Mild illness might include fever and cough. Care at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help protect people who are at risk for getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

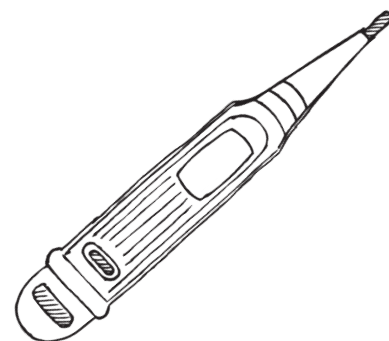
At-home care may not be appropriate for elders and people of any age with certain serious medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes. These groups are at higher risk for developing more serious effects from COVID-19 and should contact their healthcare provider as soon as symptoms start.

If you are caring for someone at home, prevent the spread of germs, watch them for emergency signs, treat symptoms, and end care only after following appropriate guidelines.

Prevent the spread of germs

COVID-19 spreads person-to-person by coughing, sneezing, or personal contact like touching or shaking hands. **Someone with mild symptoms may spread the disease without knowing they are sick. It is important for anyone showing even mild symptoms to stay inside and stay 6 feet away from others during their recovery.**

- If possible, have the sick person use another bathroom.
- Avoid sharing items like towels, dishes, and bedding.
- Have them wear a facemask or bandana over the mouth and nose when around others in the home. If the mask or bandana gets moist or wet, change it. Bandanas or homemade masks can be washed and reused.
- Wash hands with soap or use hand sanitizer often, especially after interacting with the sick person.
- Avoid touching eyes, hands, and mouth.
- Multiple times per day, clean flat surfaces that droplets can land on, such as tabletops or countertops, and surfaces that are touched often, such as doorknobs. Use household cleaners and disinfectants, and wear gloves if available. If the sick person is using a shared bathroom, that should be cleaned and disinfected after each use by the sick person.
- If possible, keep windows open to increase air flow.
- Wash laundry thoroughly. Wash hands after handling clothes.
- Avoid having visitors.



Know the emergency warning signs

People who develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 should **call 911 and get medical attention immediately.** Emergency warning signs include:

- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **Constant pain or pressure in the chest**
- **Confusion or can't wake up**
- **Blue lips or face**

Treating symptoms

There is no cure for COVID-19 at this time. To treat symptoms, the sick person should drink lots of water and rest. Contact a healthcare provider for advice. They may suggest taking over-the-counter drugs like Tylenol to help with symptoms.

Most people will have symptoms for a few days and recover after 1-2 weeks. **Elders and those with serious medical conditions are at greater risk for severe symptoms that may last a long time. People in these groups should contact their healthcare provider as soon as they show symptoms.**

Guidelines for ending care

Those who no longer have symptoms can restart normal activities under the following circumstances:

- If they do not have access to a coronavirus test:
 - They have had no fever for at least 72 hours **AND** other symptoms like coughing have improved **AND** at least 7 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.
- If they do have access to a coronavirus test:
 - They have had no fever for at least 72 hours **AND** other symptoms like coughing have improved **AND** they received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

10 ways to manage respiratory symptoms at home

If you have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider. They may tell you to manage your care from home. Follow these tips:

- 1. Stay home** from work, school, and away from other public places, even if you feel well enough to go out. If you must go out, avoid using any kind of public transportation or ridesharing.



- 2. Monitor your symptoms** carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.



- 3. Get rest and stay hydrated.**



- 4.** If you have a medical appointment, **call the healthcare provider** ahead of time and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.



- 5.** For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel** that you have or may have COVID-19.



- 6. Cover your cough and sneezes.**



- 7. Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



- 8.** As much as possible, **stay** in a specific room and **away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a facemask or a bandana.



- 9. Avoid sharing personal items** with other people in your household, like dishes, towels, and bedding.



- 10. Clean all surfaces** that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.



For more information: [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)