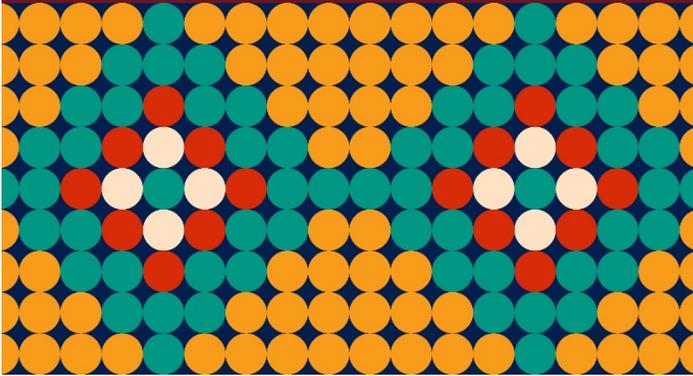


## COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus)

# Information for High-risk Individuals



## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a viral respiratory disease that can lead to lower respiratory illnesses like pneumonia and bronchitis. COVID-19 can cause severe illness and death. Currently, there are vaccines approved to prevent severe illness from COVID-19.

## How is COVID-19 spread?

- Close contact with an infected person (within six feet)
- Inhalation of respiratory droplets from when people with COVID-19 talk, cough, or sneeze
- Can be spread by people infected with COVID-19 who are not showing symptoms<sup>1</sup>

## What are the symptoms?

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure to the virus.<sup>2</sup>

## Am I at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19?

You are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 if you

- Are 65 years of age or older.<sup>3</sup>
- Live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
- Have underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
  - Heart conditions such as heart failure and coronary artery disease.
  - Lung disease like asthma, emphysema, and COPD.
  - Weakened immune system such as cancer patients with hematologic (blood) malignancies, cancer patients in active chemotherapy, people with HIV/AIDS, and smokers.
  - Diabetes and obesity.<sup>4</sup>

## I fall into a high-risk category. How do I prevent COVID-19 infection?

- **Get vaccinated** to prevent severe illness from COVID-19.
- **Avoid close contact** with people outside of your household and people who are sick.
- **Stay at least 6 feet away** from people outside of your household.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a mask** when in public.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least **20 seconds**—if soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains **at least 60% alcohol**.
- Whenever possible, **avoid touching high-touch surfaces** – i.e. door handles, handrails, countertops.
- Wash your hands after being in public places.
- **Avoid touching your face** (nose, eyes, mouth).
- **Regularly disinfect your home**, paying close attention to high-touch surfaces, i.e. doorknobs, light switches, desks, cell phones, and countertops.
- Use **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved** household disinfectants. Some examples include:
  - Clorox Multi Surface Cleaner + Bleach
  - PURELL Professional Surface Disinfectant Wipes
  - Lysol Disinfectant Spray
  - Lysol Clean & Fresh Multi-Surface Cleaner
  - **For a comprehensive Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) list, visit**  
<https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>
- If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, **stay home as much as possible**.<sup>5</sup>
- Avoid all non-essential travel.<sup>5</sup>

## How do I prepare for COVID-19 in my community if I am high-risk?

- **Continue your medications** and do not change your treatment plan without talking to your doctor.
- **Have the necessary supplies on hand.**
  - Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining **extra necessary medications** and other health guidance.
  - **Consider mail-ordering your medications.**
  - **Have over-the-counter medicines and supplies to treat fever** and other symptoms of COVID-19.
    - Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid), Tylenol (acetaminophen), Aleve (naproxen) etc.
- **Have enough household items and groceries including toiletries** on hand to stay at home for a prolonged period of time or have a plan with your family and community to ensure you can get the supplies you need.
- **Make a plan you can follow.**
  - Consider who needs to be included in your plan.
    - Identify aid organizations in your community to contact in case you need support or resources.
    - **Create an emergency contact list.**
      - Consider including family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health care providers (physician, nurse, doctor), teachers, employers, etc.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about your underlying medical conditions or if you get sick and think that you may have COVID-19. **If you need emergency help, call 911.**
- **Stay up to date on your vaccinations** and have your vaccination records on hand.
- **If you live alone, stay in touch with others by phone, text, or email.**<sup>6</sup>

## Should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

- The **Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccines were approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** and have been shown to be **safe and effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19.**<sup>7</sup>
- **These COVID-19 vaccines may be given to people with underlying conditions**, but it is important to remember that there is not enough safety data to rule out all risks.<sup>8</sup>
- Your healthcare provider is your best resource for your medical conditions. Speak with your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

## What do I do if I am high-risk and experiencing symptoms?

- **Monitor your symptoms.**
- **Call your healthcare provider before going to the clinic or hospital.**
  - It may be recommended that you stay home and monitor your symptoms rather than going in.
  - **Put on a facemask that covers your nose and mouth before you enter any facility or emergency vehicle.**
  - Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (difficulty breathing or shortness of breath).
- **Separate yourself** from other people in your home.
- **Avoid sharing** household items and regularly clean all high-touch surfaces.<sup>9</sup>
- **Take care of your emotional health.**

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