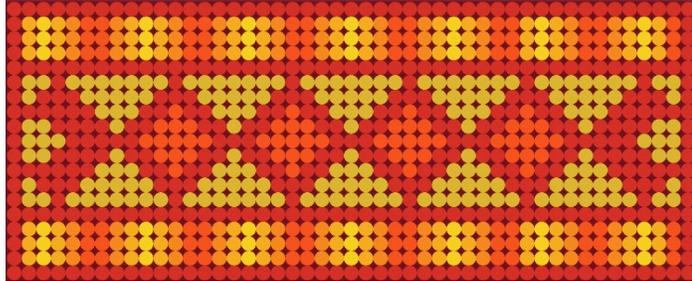


Information for People Living with HIV



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus) is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus that has not been found in people before. It can lead to lower respiratory illnesses like pneumonia and bronchitis.

How is COVID-19 spread?

Close contact with an infected person (within six feet of you)

Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks

Contact with infected surfaces or objects then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.¹

Am I at risk?

The risk for people with HIV getting very sick is greatest in

- People with a low CD4 cell count, indicating a weakened immune system, and
- People not on HIV treatment (antiretroviral therapy or ART).^{2,3}

Older people living with HIV and those with medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, renal disease, or diabetes may have an even higher risk of becoming severely ill.^{2,3}

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- 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.⁴

There is a possibility that symptoms may appear differently for those with compromised immune systems, i.e. symptoms may be fewer and milder in the early stages of the virus but the level of disease present may be more severe, so it is important that you and your doctor are aware and observant.^{3,6}

How can I prepare for COVID-19?

Ensure you have an ample medication supply.

- 30-day supply at all times
- Ask your provider about receiving your medication by mail.

Keep vaccinations up to date.

- Influenza and pneumococcal

Establish plans for clinical care if isolated or quarantined.

- Telemedicine options
- Physician online portals

Maintain a social network with family and friends remotely.

- Social contact helps us stay mentally healthy and fights boredom.
- Still, even if they may not seem ill, it is important to not have contact with others who can spread the virus.^{2,5}

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

Call ahead before visiting your doctor. DO NOT go to the clinic or hospital without calling ahead first.

Monitor your symptoms. Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening.

Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms except to get medical care.

Wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.

Avoid sharing personal household items.⁷

If you are concerned you have symptoms of COVID-19, or if you have questions regarding this disease, contact your local health department.

“People living with HIV are resilient. We have worked together tirelessly for quality of life and better health outcomes and will continue to do so.”

—Rico Gustav, Executive Director
Global Network of People Living with HIV

Local resources specifically dealing with COVID-19

Provide a listing of all resources available to our communities. See example list of local resources below.

List of local resources

Washington State Department of Health

(206) 418-5500

Washington State DOH HIV Client Services

(877) 376-9316

Washington Information Network: Health, Human Services and Legal Resources

(206) 461-3200/2-1-1

King County Health Department HIV/STD

Department

(206) 263-2000

Gay City

(206) 860-6969

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6. Comment on COVID-19 from the British HIV Association (BHIVA). Accessed June 2, 2021. <https://www.bhiva.org/comment-on-COVID-19-from-BHIVA>
7. CDC. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Prevention & Treatment. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published March 8, 2021. Accessed June 2, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
8. Lessons learnt from the HIV response for COVID-19: Building community resilience – GNP+. Accessed June 2, 2021. <https://gnpplus.net/latest/comment/lessons-learnt-from-the-hiv-response-for-covid-19-building-community-resilience/>