

Caring for someone with COVID-19 at home

Most people who get COVID-19 will have mild or moderate symptoms that can be managed at home and will not need to be hospitalized. However, if the person lives with other people, precautions should be taken to try to keep them from being infected. The CDC and WHO have put out guidelines for how to deal with this.

Steps to prevent the spread

■ These guidelines should be followed even if a person hasn't been given a definite diagnosis. Because tests are limited, people with symptoms of COVID-19 should act as if they have it. Those who have been directly exposed to a person with COVID-19 should also self-quarantine.

■ **Contact the patient's health-care provider** about their symptoms to get specific guidance on treatment.

■ **The patient should stay home** and not go out in public. They should stay in one room, away from other people and with the door closed, as much as possible. Keep the room well-ventilated, such as with an open window. Any shared spaces should also be well-ventilated.

■ **Have them use a separate bathroom.** If there is only one bathroom, the sick person should always put the toilet seat down when flushing, and the room, toilet surfaces and faucet should be cleaned at least once a day.

■ **Avoid having any nonessential visitors.**

■ **Designate one healthy person to look after the patient.** Keep older adults, children and those with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems away. They should stay in contact via phone or online.

■ **The patient should wear a face mask whenever they are around anybody else.** If they can't wear one, you should wear one while in the same room with them and replace it after it gets wet.

■ **Don't share personal household items** like dishes, towels and bedding. No one should share the sick person's bed.

■ **Food and beverages can be left outside the door** for the patient to retrieve. Wash dishes immediately after.

■ **Wash your hands often with soap and water** for at least 20 seconds, and every time after interacting with the sick person or items they have been in contact with. Use a disposable paper towel to dry your hands. If this isn't possible, use a clean towel and wash them often.

■ **The sick person should cover their mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard it (and all trash) into a lined, covered trash can. The closed, bagged trash should be disposed of in the outside can for pickup.

■ **Avoid direct contact with the person's body fluids or stool.** Use disposable gloves when dealing with waste.

■ **Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.**

■ **Keep pets away from the patient** out of an abundance of caution.

■ **Clean and disinfect the house daily** (see section at right).



WARNING SIGNS

Trouble breathing

Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

New confusion or inability to arouse

Bluish lips or face

Get medical attention immediately for these symptoms. Alert 911 and the dispatched providers that the patient has or may have COVID-19. Contact your medical provider to get guidance on other severe or worrying symptoms. Call ahead before going to the doctor or emergency room, as special guidelines may be in place to protect others.

Keeping the home clean

■ **Every day, clean all surfaces that are touched often, like counters and doorknobs.** They can be cleaned first with regular cleaning solution and then disinfected with a diluted bleach solution or a household disinfectant with a label that says EPA-registered for coronaviruses.



■ **To make a bleach solution,** add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.

■ **Put all of the sick person's laundry in a separate bag.** Keep items away from your body and do not shake the items as you put them in the washer. Wash the items thoroughly with detergent in hot water.

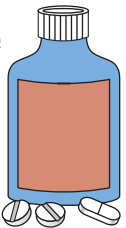
Symptom treatment

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, tiredness and shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea and loss of smell.

■ **Take over-the-counter medicine** for symptoms.

■ **Drink lots of fluids** to stay hydrated.

■ **According to the CDC,** symptoms for most people last a few days to about a week, though for some they may last longer.



Ending quarantine

The CDC recommends that people who have self-isolated can go outside the home if all the following conditions are met:

■ **IF NO TEST CAN BE ADMINISTERED TO DETERMINE IF THEY ARE STILL CONTAGIOUS:**

They have had no fever for at least 72 hours without using medicine that reduces fever **AND** other symptoms have improved **AND** at least seven days have passed since their symptoms first appeared

■ **IF THEY CAN GET A TEST TO DETERMINE IF THEY ARE STILL CONTAGIOUS:**

They no longer have a fever without using medicine that reduces fever **AND** other symptoms have improved **AND** they received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

