

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

### If You Are at Higher Risk



#### Who is at higher risk?

Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease

### Get ready for COVID-19 now

Take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick



If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

- Stock up on supplies.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
- During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.

#### Have supplies on hand



- Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications.
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
- Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time.

See also: [Get Your Home Ready](#)



## Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs

- **Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms** including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
- **If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately.** In adults, emergency warning signs\*:
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

## What to do if you get sick

- **Stay home and call your doctor.**
- **Call your healthcare provider and let them know about your symptoms.** Tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help them take care of you and keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- **If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home.** Follow CDC instructions for [how to take care of yourself at home](#).
- **Know when to get emergency help.**
- **Get medical attention immediately if you have any of the emergency warning signs listed above.**

See also: [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)

## What others can do to support older adults

### Community support for older adults

- **Community preparedness planning for COVID-19 should include older adults and people with disabilities, and the organizations that support them in their communities, to ensure their needs are taken into consideration.**
  - Many of these individuals live in the community, and many depend on services and supports provided in their homes or in the community to maintain their health and independence.
- **Long-term care facilities should be vigilant to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19.** [Information for long-term care facilities can be found here.](#)

### Family and caregiver support

- **Know what medications your loved one is taking** and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- **Monitor food and other medical supplies** (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan.
- **Stock up on non-perishable food** to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- **If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.**

## More info



Prevention and Treatment



Get Your Household Ready



What to Do if You are Sick

### COVID-19: What Older Adults Need to Know

Jay Butler, Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases at CDC, describes preventative measures to help protect older adults from COVID-19.

### AARP's Coronavirus Information Tele-Town Hall



CDC and other federal experts presented at an AARP tele-town hall event held on March 10, 2020 discussing prevention and care for older adults.

Page last reviewed: March 12, 2020