

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Recent Updates:

12/20/20: The required quarantine period for individuals who have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been shortened. Close contacts are now required to self-quarantine (stay in their home or another residence, separate from others) and monitor for symptoms for **10 days** from their last contact with the case instead of for 14 days.
12/2/20: All public and private gatherings with individuals outside your household are temporarily prohibited.



1. How are coronaviruses spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing, and talking
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person

It may also be possible that a person can also get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way that it spreads. Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and death. Some people with COVID-19 never get symptoms.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include one or more of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell. This list of symptoms is not complete. Please talk to your medical provider about any of these or other symptoms that are severe or concern you. See ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare for more information about symptoms.

3. What should I do if I have these symptoms?

If you get symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider and consider testing for COVID-19. Remain home and away from others if you are ill. If you have COVID-19, you should follow the *Home Isolation Instructions* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). These include staying home for at least 10 days from when your symptoms first appeared AND at least 1 day (24

Key Points

- COVID-19 is spread through close contact or by touching an object or surface with the virus on it.
- The best protection is to:
 - Wear a cloth face covering
 - Practice physical distancing
 - Wash your hands frequently
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Self-isolate if you are sick
 - Quarantine if you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19
- People who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 should get a test.

For more information:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Call 2-1-1

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

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hours) after your fever has gone without the use of medications AND your symptoms have improved.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, be sure to tell all of your [close contacts](#) that they must quarantine and monitor their health for 10 days. Their quarantine can end after Day 10 if they never had any symptoms and if from Day 11 through Day 14 they monitor their health and are extra careful with regular COVID-19 precautions. It is recommended that close contacts get tested for COVID-19 to check if they are infected. If they test negative, they still need to quarantine for 10 days. See the *Home Quarantine Instructions for Close Contacts to COVID-19* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) for additional guidance.

Older adults, and those with weak immune systems or underlying health problems who experience COVID-19 symptoms should call their doctor early, even if they have mild symptoms.

People with emergency warning signs that include difficulty breathing, chest pain or pressure, bluish lips or face, confusion or difficulty waking up should call 9-1-1 immediately or go to an emergency room. If it is not urgent, call your doctor before going in to seek care.

4. What should I do if I think I may have been exposed to COVID-19?

If you meet criteria for a “close contact”, you must self-quarantine and monitor your health for 10 days from your last exposure to the infected person and get tested for COVID-19. You can end your quarantine after Day 10 if you don’t have any symptoms during the 10 days and if from Day 11 through Day 14 you monitor your health and are extra careful with regular COVID-19 precautions. You are a close contact if:

- You were within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- You had unprotected contact with the body fluids and/or secretions from someone with COVID-19. For example, you were coughed or sneezed on, you shared a drinking cup or eating utensils, you kissed, or you provided care to them without wearing the right protective equipment.

A person with COVID-19 can infect others from 2 days before their symptoms first started until they are allowed to end their home isolation (as described in [Home Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19](#)). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but who does not have symptoms is considered to be infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test. Additional instructions can be found in the home instructions guide.

If you don’t meet the criteria to quarantine but were in a crowded situation and/or in close contact with people who were not wearing face coverings and maintaining 6 feet of distance, consider getting tested and staying home for 10 days. If you have recently returned after non-essential travel to another state or country, you are asked to self-quarantine at home for 10 days. In these situations, limit contact to only those in your household. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others in your household, wear a face covering even at home, and wash your hands and clean high-touch surfaces often. If you get symptoms, call your medical provider and discuss getting tested.

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5. Should I get tested for the coronavirus?

It is recommended that people with symptoms of coronavirus get tested. If you are experiencing new symptoms that you think may be from coronavirus, let your doctor know and discuss getting tested. You can also visit covid19.lacounty.gov/testing or call 2-1-1 to schedule a same-day or next-day appointment for free testing.

If you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, it is recommended that you get a test. This is to see if you are infected and could have infected others. Note that you will still need to stay in quarantine even if your test is negative. See ph.lacounty.gov/covidtests for more information.

If you may have been exposed to COVID-19 because you were present at a gathering or activity where you were in a crowded situation and/or in close contact with people who were not wearing face coverings and maintaining 6 feet of distance, consider getting tested and stay home for 10 days.

6. How is COVID-19 treated?

There is no cure for the illness caused by COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's condition. Be aware of scam products for sale that make false claims to prevent or treat this infection. For more information see [COVID Scams and Fraud](#).

7. What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?

There are steps that everyone can take daily to [reduce the risk](#) of getting sick or infecting others with COVID-19.

You should:

- Wear a cloth face covering whenever you are outside of your home and around others who are not part of your household.
- Practice [social or physical distancing](#). Whenever you are out, keep at least 6 feet apart from everyone else as much as possible.
- Avoid crowded places and give yourself space from others.
- Keep interactions with non-household members short.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, toys, or sports equipment (unless it has been disinfected before sharing).
- Avoid or clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often using a regular household cleaning product.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue,

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use your elbow (not your hands).

- Increase ventilation - go outside or open windows if it is safe to do so.
- People with underlying health conditions have a much greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19. It is very important for the County's vulnerable residents to stay at home as much as possible and have groceries and medicine delivered.

8. Can I visit with my family or friends who do not live with me?

For now, you must stay away from people who are not in your household. Spending time in close proximity with people from different households increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The fewer people you have in-person contact with, the lower your risk of getting COVID-19. As of December 18, 2020, all private and public gatherings with individuals not in your household are temporarily prohibited (except for faith-based services and protests).

People at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (such as older adults and people with chronic medical conditions) are strongly urged not to attend any gatherings. Medical-grade masks may provide greater protection than cloth face coverings, so people at high risk should strongly consider using these medical face coverings if they will have any close contact with individuals from outside their household.

9. Should I wear a facemask?

Cloth face coverings must be used by everyone 2 years and older to cover the nose and mouth when they leave their home. These face coverings are used to help protect others from your respiratory droplets in case you have COVID-19 and are not showing signs of infection. New research indicates that cloth face coverings also offer some protection for the wearer from respiratory droplets from others. People with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have COVID-19 should use a surgical facemask (if available) when they need to leave their home for medical appointments.

Infants and children under the age of 2 should not wear cloth face coverings. Adults should always supervise children under the age of 8 while they are wearing a face covering to ensure the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation. Anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious or otherwise unable to remove the mask or cloth face covering without help or who has been instructed by their medical provider not to wear it for medical reasons should not wear one. See [Cloth Face Covering Guidance](#) for more information.

10. Is it safe to travel?

The state of California has issued a travel advisory recommending that all non-essential travel be cancelled and that any travelers entering or returning to California self-quarantine for 10 days. Travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, so staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick. Airports, bus stations, train stations, and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus in the air and on surfaces and it can be hard to keep 6 feet apart from other people. If you are thinking of traveling, consider the following:

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- Is COVID-19 spreading where you're going?
- Are you, or anyone you are traveling with, visiting, or spending time with at your destination or when you return home, more likely to get very ill from COVID-19?
- Does the country, state, or local government where you are traveling to or returning to require you to stay home for 10 days after traveling?
- If you are required to stay home or if you get sick with COVID-19, will you have to miss work or school?

Do not travel if you are sick, or if you have been around someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

If you must travel, protect yourself and others by following the steps in the question above "What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?" and the tips for preparing for travel on the CDC [Travel](#) webpage. This webpage also explains the risks from different types of travel.

When returning after non-essential travel to another state or country you are asked to self-quarantine at home for 10 days and limit contact to only those in your household. Non-essential travel is considered travel that is done as part of a vacation for tourism or for recreation.

If you are considered an essential worker and your travel is for work or school then you are not required to stay at home upon your return to Los Angeles County. Essential workers are those who provide critical infrastructure, economic services and supply chains, health, immediate medical care, and safety and security for the community. See page 5 and 14 of the [Reopening Safer at Work and in the Community Health Officer Order](#) for more details on who is considered an essential worker.

11. How do I know when work, public spaces, or businesses are safely opening?

Visit the Public Health website to see [What's open in Los Angeles County](#). It is a good idea to **check online or call and ask about safety measures before visiting a business**.

Even though some places are now open, it is important to remember that the virus has not changed, and COVID-19 remains a serious risk. It is still easily spread among people in close contact with each other. You can help [reduce the risk](#) of COVID-19 by continuing to practice social (physical) distancing, wear a cloth face covering whenever you are around others, and wash your hands frequently. Also, remember to stay home if you are sick or if you have been in close contact with someone who is sick.

12. What can I do if I get stressed about COVID-19?

When you hear, read, or watch news about COVID-19, it is normal to feel anxious and overwhelmed. It is important to care for your mental as well as your physical health. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the 211LA webpage (211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health) provide local resources to address mental health & wellbeing needs and concerns. Guidance and resources are also available on the CDC webpage, [Coping with Stress](#).

LA County residents have free access to [Headspace Plus](#). This is a collection of mindfulness and meditation resources in English and Spanish. It also has movement and sleep exercises to help manage stress, fear, and anxiety related to COVID-19.

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If you want to speak with someone about your mental health, contact your doctor or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-854-7771. You can also text “LA” to 74174.

13. What can I do if I am feeling harassed or discriminated against?

The County is committed to assuring that all residents affected by COVID-19 are treated with respect and compassion and that we all separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. The outbreak is no excuse for spreading racism and discrimination. If you are being harassed or experiencing discrimination based on race, nation of origin or other identities, you should report it. 2-1-1 takes reports (by phone or online) of hate crimes, hate acts, and incidents of bullying that have occurred within Los Angeles County regardless of whether or not a crime has been committed. Call 2-1-1 or file a report online at <https://www.211la.org/resources/service/hate-crimes-reporting-22>.

14. What else can I do?

- Find a healthcare provider if you don't already have one. If you need help finding a doctor, the 24/7 LA County information line can help - call 2-1-1 or visit the [211LA website](#).
- Get your flu immunization. Flu will be circulating at the same time as COVID-19 and it is important to protect yourself and those around you from becoming ill with flu. For information on where to get vaccinated for free or low cost, call 211 or visit ph.lacounty.gov/media/FluSeason.
- Be prepared with food and essential supplies to last 14 days in case you need to isolate yourself or quarantine.
- Always check with trusted sources for up-to-date, accurate information about novel coronavirus.
 - Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
 - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
 - World Health Organization (WHO, International)
 - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

If you have questions and would like to speak to someone, call 2-1-1.