

# Home Care Instructions for People with Respiratory Symptoms

During the current Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, it is likely that many people with cold and flu-like symptoms have COVID-19. Most people do not need to see a doctor or get a test for COVID-19 because they will have a mild illness and get better at home. However, people should call their doctor early if they are 65 years and older, pregnant, or have a health problem such as a chronic disease or a weak immune system, because they are at higher risk of serious illness.

This guidance provides home care instructions for people with symptoms of COVID-19 which include fever, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing.

## Home Care

There is no specific treatment for the virus that causes COVID-19. Here are steps that you can take to help you get better:

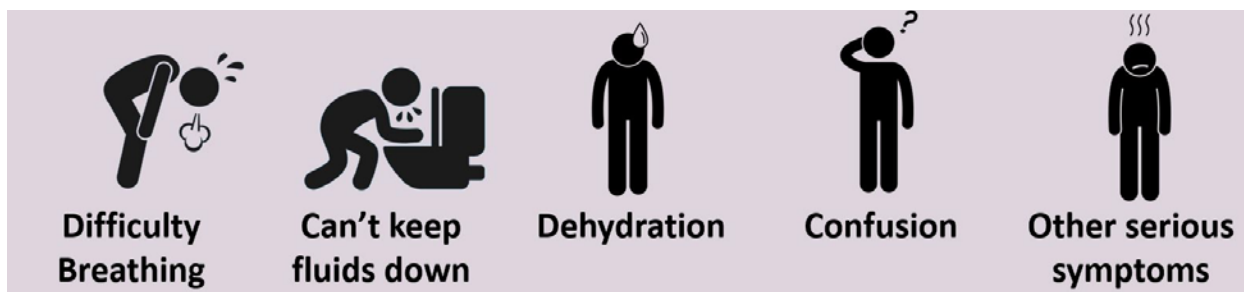
- Rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain.
- Note that children younger than age 2 should not be given any over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.
- Note that these medicines do not “cure” the illness and do not stop you from spreading germs.

## Seeking Medical Care

Seek prompt medical care if your symptoms get worse (e.g. difficulty breathing). Call your doctor early if you are at a higher risk of serious illness. If you need assistance finding a medical provider or mental health services, please call 2-1-1.

**Call ahead before visiting your doctor:** You may be able to get advice by phone, including discussing with your doctor if you need to be examined or tested. If you do visit a healthcare facility, put on a mask before you enter to protect others from catching an infection from you. If you do not have a mask, wear a [cloth face cover](#).

It is recommended that you seek medical care for serious symptoms, such as:



People with life-threatening symptoms should call 911. Tell the dispatch personnel that you may have COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask (or face covering) before emergency medical services arrive.

COVID-19 may be stressful for people, visit [publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/](https://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/) to learn how to care for your mental health and support your loved ones. If you need 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 (800) 854-7771.

## **PROTECTING OTHERS**

**Follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and your community.**

### **Stay home, except to get medical care**

- Do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- Stay home until at least 7 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after you have recovered. Recovery means that your fever is gone for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and your respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
- If you must leave home while you are sick, do not use public transportation. Use a personal vehicle if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, keep as much distance as possible between you and the driver, leave the windows down and wear a mask (or face covering).
- If you do not have someone to help you, if possible, arrange for food and other necessities to be left at your door.

### **Separate yourself from other people in your home**

- Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home as much as possible. It is particularly important to stay away from people who are at higher risk of serious illness.
- Use a separate bathroom. If this is not possible, clean the bathroom after use (see below).
- Stay at least 6 feet from others.
- Open windows or use a fan or an air conditioner, if possible, in shared spaces in the home to ensure good airflow.
- Do not allow visitors and limit the number of people in your home.
- Do not handle pets or other animals.
- Do not prepare or serve food to others.

### **Wear a facemask when you are around others**

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a hospital or doctor's office. Currently, there are shortages of facemasks. If you do not have a mask, wear a cloth face cover. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you. If they must enter your room, they should wear a facemask. After leaving your room, they should immediately clean their hands, then remove and dispose of their facemask, and clean their hands again wash their hands.

### **Cover your coughs and sneezes**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands.

### **Avoid sharing personal household items**

Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. Wash them thoroughly with soap and water after use.

### **Clean your hands often**

Wash your hands often and thoroughly, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

### **Clean and disinfect all “high-touch” surfaces every day**

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean and disinfect any surfaces that may have body fluids on them. Use household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes, according to the product label instructions. See cleaning instructions in *Preventing the spread of respiratory illness in the home* on the Public Health website

## **TALK TO YOUR CLOSE CONTACTS**

### **Quarantine**

Be sure to tell all of your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Close contacts include all household members, any intimate contacts, and all individuals who were within 6 feet of you for more than 10 minutes, starting 48 hours before your symptoms began until your isolation period ends. In addition, anyone who had contact with your body fluids and/or secretions (such as were coughed on/sneezed on, shared utensils or saliva or provided care to you without wearing protective equipment) needs to be in quarantine. They should self-quarantine even if they feel well because it can take 2– 14 days for them to show symptoms. See the [Home quarantine guidance for those exposed to COVID-19](#).

### **Cleaning**

Your caregivers and household contacts should wear a disposable facemask and gloves if they clean your room or bathroom or come into contact with your body fluids, and/or secretions (such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or diarrhea). They should remove and dispose of their gloves first, clean their hands, then remove and dispose of their facemask, and clean their hands again.