

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Individuals and Families

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking you to help slow the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). We also encourage you to create a household plan to help protect your health and the health of those in your community.

### Understand how coronaviruses are spread

COVID-19 is likely to spread in the same way as other respiratory illnesses like influenza. It is thought to spread from an infected person who has symptoms to others by:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

### Teach your family the importance of taking steps to prevent infection,

There is no vaccine or cure for COVID-19 at this time. Antibiotics only treat infections caused by bacteria so don't work against the virus that causes COVID-19. The best thing you can do to protect yourself is to take steps to avoid infection:

- Practice social distancing which means stay at least 6 feet away from others.
  - Postpone social visits and play dates.
  - Keep children that are at home entertained by playing games, reading books or going for walks, but try to go during a time of the day when the parks or hiking trails are not crowded.
  - If you need to run errands (e.g. visits to grocery stores or social service agencies) go when places are less crowded like early or late in the day.
  - Those who are over the age of 65 or have weakened immune systems should try to find a friend who can pick up groceries for them.
  - If you have to visit your doctor call ahead and see if they have telehealth options that allow you to interact with your doctor from home.
- Avoid any non-essential activities that involve close contact with the general public; maintain a distance of 6 feet from others.
- Wash your hands often and do it thoroughly. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for at least 20 seconds,
- Limit close contact with people who are sick. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from someone who is sick – for example, if you see someone coughing, move away.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (see cleaning below).
- Do not share objects such as utensils, cups, food, and drink.
- Get a flu shot to protect against influenza.

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### Know the symptoms of COVID-19

Most people will have a mild or moderate illness and will get better without complications. Symptoms in children tend to be milder, but our understanding of this illness is continuing to evolve. We do know that some individuals, mainly adults, will become severely ill and need to go to the hospital.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

### Take extra care if you are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19

Some people are more likely to become seriously ill if they get COVID-19. This includes the elderly, people with HIV or cancer who may have weakened immune systems, and those with heart or lung disease. It is very important that these people take extra care to avoid close contact with other people who are sick and contact their healthcare provider immediately if they do become sick.

### Know what to do if you become ill

- Stay at home or go home as soon as possible if you begin to feel unwell, even if you have mild symptoms such as headache and a slight runny nose. Stay home for 7 days since symptoms started and at least 72 hours after you no longer have a fever or symptoms without the use of fever-reducing medicines whichever is longer.
- Wash your hands well and often.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue, and then dispose of the tissue and clean your hands immediately. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others. Use the separate room and bathroom if possible. Wear a disposable facemask if you are not able to avoid close contact with others.
- Do not care for others if possible while you are sick.
- If you have pets, avoid contact including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food while you are sick.
- If you must care for people or pets while you are sick, wash your hands before and after.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes ([see cleaning](#)).
- Do not share objects such as utensils, cups, food, and drink as well as personal hygiene items like toothbrushes and towels.
- Get plenty of fluids.
- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications can reduce fever and help you feel better. Remember to follow the instructions on the package instructions. Note that these medicines do not stop you from spreading germs.

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- Children should not be given medication that contains aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) because it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. Medicines **without** aspirin include acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®).
- Children younger than age 2 should not be given any over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.
- Seek medical care if needed.
- Watch for signs of serious symptoms such as worsening fever, rapid breathing, shortness of breath or dehydration (unable to keep fluids down).

### **KEEP EMERGENCY ROOMS AND HOSPITALS FREE TO TREAT SERIOUS ILLNESSES!**

- People with mild illnesses should not go to ERs or hospitals for treatment or to request testing for COVID-19
- Most people with flu-like illness will get better without the need to see a doctor or take special medicines.
- Call your doctor or clinic before going in to be sure they need to see you.

### **Cleaning**

Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, banisters, countertops, toys, remote controls, faucet handles, and phones. Use the usual cleaning agents and follow the label directions.

- Clean surfaces and items to remove visible dirt and disinfect them to kill germs.
- Follow the instructions on the product labels, including wearing gloves and having good ventilation. Use household cleaners and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface.
- To find out if the product works against viruses, read the product label, call the 1-800 number on the label or visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).
- A bleach solution can also be used as a disinfectant - mix 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water, or for a larger supply, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- For more information see the Public Health Guide "Preventing the Spread of Respiratory Illness in the Home" available at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/>

### **Consider the impact of COVID-19 on school, work, and other activities**

#### *School and childcare*

- Make sure that you are signed up to receive notices (such as robo-calls, and emails) from your school or childcare.
- Consider how you will manage childcare if there are closures, early dismissals, or other changes to school activities.

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- To help prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19, make plans so that children and teens do not gather in other public places if school is closed.
- Ask your school how your child can continue to learn if they aren't in school.
- Ask how social services (such as student meal programs) will be affected.
- If your children are in the care of others, urge their caregivers to watch for COVID-19 symptoms.
- If your child attends a college or university, encourage them to follow the school's plan for slowing the spread of COVID-19.

### *Work*

- Find out about leave policies at work, including if you need to have a doctor's note or need to stay home to care for others.
- Ask about options to work from home if you have a job that might be suitable for teleworking.

### *Caring for others*

- Make a plan for taking care of family members who are elderly, disabled or sick if they or their caregivers become ill.

### *Other Situations*

- For tasks or situations that cannot be avoided, stop, think through how you can protect yourself and others as much as possible. Strategies include the use of protective gear, keeping as much of a distance from people as you can, and reducing the amount of time that you need to be in a situation.

### **Preparing at home**

- Make sure that you know the phone number of your doctor's office, local urgent care, and ER facilities so that you can call them if you become sick instead of just showing up. Put important numbers on the fridge and in your phones.
- If you don't already have a healthcare provider, the County information line 2-1-1 can help you to find one.
- **Create an emergency contact list.** Ensure your household has a current list of emergency contacts for family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, teachers, employers, and other community resources. Know that you can call the LA County information helpline 2-1-1.
- **Get to know your neighbors.** Talk with your neighbors about emergency planning. If your neighborhood has a website or social media page, consider joining it to maintain access to neighbors, information, and resources.
- **Identify aid organizations in your community.** Create a list of local organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you need access to information, health care services, support, and resources. Consider including organizations that provide mental health or counseling services, food, and other supplies.
- Have adequate supplies of prescription medications as well as over the counter medicines to help with cold and flu symptoms.

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- **Take care of the emotional health of yourself and other household members.** Outbreaks are stressful for everyone, but children may respond differently to adults. Talk with your children about the outbreak, try to stay calm, and reassure them that they are safe. Read <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html> for more information. **Stay in touch with others by phone or email.**
- If you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, read "[Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)" on the Public Health website. For help, talk to your doctor or call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.

### Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news, and hoaxes surrounding COVID-19. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by Public Health through press releases, social media, and our website. The website has more information on COVID-19 including FAQs, infographics and a guide to coping with stress, as well as tips on handwashing.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
  - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
  - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline (800) 854-7771.

Other reliable sources of information about novel coronavirus are:

- 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, or need help finding medical care, call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1 which is available 24/7.

**911 is not for health information!**  
Keep emergency lines open.

For more information visit the CDC webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>