

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Social Distancing

Public Health is asking everyone to do their part to help slow the spread of novel coronavirus in our community by practicing social distancing. This means making changes in our daily lives to protect ourselves and others, including those who are most at risk. People who are sick or who have been in contact with people who have COVID-19 should take stronger measures than social distancing to reduce the risk of infecting others (see *resources* at the end of this guide).

What is social distancing?

Social distancing means staying home, avoiding crowds and staying at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible.

Why is everyone being asked to practice social distancing?

When someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes the small droplets from their nose or mouth can travel 3-6 feet. People can get infected if they breathe in these droplets, or the droplets land on their eyes, nose, or mouth. Although people who are sick with COVID-19 are the most infectious, people may spread the virus a few days before they start to feel unwell.

It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

The less time that we spend within 6 feet of each other, and the fewer people we interact with, the more likely we are to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The Health Officer of Los Angeles County and the Governor of California have issued orders that require people to stay home unless they have to access essential businesses or services such as purchasing food, going to the bank, or seeking healthcare or social services. Public gatherings, such as performances, parties, worship services, beaches, are prohibited, and beaches, playgrounds and hiking trails are closed. Essential workers, who are those providing the services everyone needs, are allowed to leave their homes to go to work as long as they practice social distancing whenever possible. To read the Los Angeles County orders and related guidance, visit the Public Health webpage <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> and click on "Health Officer Order". To view the State executive orders, view <https://www.gov.ca.gov/category/executive-orders/>

How do I practice social distancing?

- If you have to go out, avoid places where a lot of people are together.
- Work or study from home, if possible.
- Do not have visitors over or let your children have playdates.
- Avoid health care settings – unless you need essential services.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Avoid public transport, if you can.

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- Avoid close contact with people – instead of shaking hands, come up with other ways to greet people that don't involve any touching.

If you do have to use public transport, shop, go to work, or participate in other activities, take precautions to reduce the risks, such as:

- Limit the amount of time you spend in close contact with others.
- Limit the number of different people you spend time with.
- Keep as far away from others as possible, especially if they are coughing or sneezing.
- Try to go to places at times when they are less busy.
- Avoid touching surfaces in public places, when possible.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.
- Clean your hands often, especially after touching surfaces in public places and before eating and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

What if I am at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19?

Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. This includes pregnant women, adults over age 65 and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, or a weakened immune system. If this applies to you, take extra precautions if possible, e.g.:

- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid caring for children.
- Stay home as much as possible.
- If you do go out, avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Avoid any gatherings. Only allow visitors who are providing essential services.
- Ask for food and other essential items to be brought to your door through family, neighbors, or delivery services.

Food and other necessities

- Go to the store when it is less busy and stock up on essential supplies so that you don't have to go out as often and keep at least 6 feet away from people as much as you can.
- Restaurants and cafes cannot offer eat-in dining, but you can still use delivery, drive-thru or carry out as long as everyone practices social distancing as much as possible.

Tips

- If you order something for delivery, if possible, pay and tip electronically and ask for the item to be left outside your door. Remove food from delivery bags and boxes and dispose of the packaging. Wash your hands after handling the packaging.
- Talk to your school or work about options for studying or working remotely.
- Spend time outdoors – you can hike, walk, or bike if you can stay 6 feet apart from others. Avoid playgrounds, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, which are now closed.

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- Exercise at home or outdoors - as long as you are 6 feet from others.
- Avoid isolation by using technology and the phone to communicate with friends and family often.
- Take care of one another – check-in by phone with friends, family, and neighbors who are vulnerable to serious illness or have mobility issues. Offer to help, while still following social distance guidelines.
- If you are sick, call your doctor or dentist before visiting. Check their website or call to find out if they offer telemedicine or phone advice.
- Stay informed through trusted sources for the latest accurate information about novel coronavirus

Resources:

If you need help finding social services, essential items like food, or medical care, call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7. 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.

Visit the DPH coronavirus webpage <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> for information that can be downloaded and printed on topics such as:

- What You Should Know (Infographic)
- How to Cope with Stress
- Cleaning in the Home
- Handwashing
- What If I'm Exposed
- Home quarantine guidance for close contacts to COVID-19 ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- Home care instructions for people with Respiratory Symptoms ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- What to do if you Have symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Infographic/poster) ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))