**What is COVID-19?**
COVID-19 is a disease that was first identified in humans in 2019. It is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Most people who have COVID-19 have mild symptoms. But COVID-19 can also cause severe illness and death. People can also be infected and never have symptoms. Some groups have a higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, especially unvaccinated older adults and unvaccinated people who have certain medical conditions. In addition, some vaccinated people who are severely immunocompromised are also at higher risk. Some people experience post-COVID conditions. This includes a wide range of new or returning symptoms or ongoing health problems that can last for weeks or months. Even people who did not have symptoms at first can experience post-COVID conditions. See CDC Post-COVID Conditions.

**What are coronavirus variants?**
Like all viruses, SARS-CoV-2 changes constantly through mutation. These mutations add up and create slightly different versions of the virus, called “variants”. Sometimes, a mutation will result in the virus spreading more easily, making people sicker or making it resistant to treatment or vaccines. Currently, the CDC has found that all 3 vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. are highly effective at preventing serious illness and death from variants. For more information, see the CDC webpage What You Need to Know About Variants.

**How is COVID-19 spread?**
The SARS-CoV-2 virus spreads from person to person mainly through respiratory droplets that are released into the air by a person who has COVID-19. For example, when they speak, sing, cough, shout, sneeze, or breathe heavily. These droplets are then breathed in by other people or land in their nose, mouth, or eyes. A person’s risk of getting infected goes up the closer they are to someone with COVID-19. Enclosed places with poor air flow can also increase the risk of getting infected. This is because the droplets that have the virus can concentrate and spread in the air past 6 feet. They can even stay floating in the air after an infected person has left the room. It is also possible, but less common, for the virus to spread by touching a surface with droplets on it and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. See the CDC webpage How COVID-19 spreads.

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**
Symptoms of COVID-19 may include one or more of the following: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, feeling tired, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, stuffy or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell. Some people with COVID-19 infection never get symptoms. Talk to your doctor about any of these or other symptoms that worry you. If you need help finding a doctor, call the 24/7 helpline at 2-1-1 or visit the 211LA.org. To learn about symptoms & what to do if you are sick, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare.
When should I get tested for COVID-19?
You should get a swab or saliva test for COVID-19 (whether you are fully vaccinated or not) if:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19 or
- You are a close contact¹ to someone with COVID-19

Testing may be required depending on where you work, study, or live. Visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidtests to learn more about when to get a test. To make an appointment for free testing, visit covid19.lacounty.gov/testing or call 2-1-1.

What if I test positive for COVID-19?
If you test positive for COVID-19, you must isolate. Stay home and away from others for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started AND at least 1 day after your fever has gone without the use of medicine AND your symptoms have improved. If you don’t have symptoms, you must isolate for 10 days from the date your positive test was taken. For more details, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation. In addition, see Understanding Your Viral Test Result on ph.lacounty.gov/covidtests.

You must also tell all your close contacts that they could be infected and must quarantine unless they are exempt. Give them the instructions for close contacts. They are available in multiple languages at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine. Your close contacts must follow the instructions even if they feel well or are fully vaccinated.

What if I have been in close contact to someone with COVID-19?
If you are a close contact to someone with COVID-19 you must follow all instructions even if you feel well or are fully vaccinated. You will need to quarantine unless you are exempt*. You must monitor your health AND take extra precautions for 14 days after your last contact with the infected person.

It is recommended that you get a COVID-19 test, unless you had a positive viral test for COVID-19 in the past 90 days. For more details, including how long to quarantine, see the instructions for close contacts at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.

*Exemptions: You do not need to quarantine if you have no symptoms of COVID-19 AND you are either fully vaccinated or you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 3 months (90 days) and recovered (i.e., you have completed your isolation period).

¹ A “close contact” is any of the following people who were exposed to you while you were infectious:
   a. Any person who was within 6 feet of you for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period
   b. Any person who had unprotected contact with your body fluids and/or secretions. For example, you coughed or sneezed on them, you shared utensils, a cup, or saliva with them, or they cared for you without wearing appropriate protective equipment.

² You are considered to be infectious (meaning you can spread COVID-19 to others) starting 2 days before your symptoms began until your isolation ends. If you test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms, you are considered to be infectious from 2 days before your test was taken until 10 days after your test.
When am I fully vaccinated?

You are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two (2) weeks after:

- You got a single dose of Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, or
- You got a second dose of a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or
- You finished the series of a COVID-19 vaccine that has been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization.²

See ph.lacounty.gov/fullyvax for more information.

How can I protect myself and others from getting COVID-19?

Stopping this pandemic is going to take all our tools.

- Get vaccinated and get a booster if you are eligible. It is the best way to protect against COVID-19. Vaccination will slow the spread of variants and decrease the chances that new, even more dangerous variants emerge.

- Wear a mask that fits and filters well. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information.

- Avoid places where COVID-19 spreads more easily. Including crowded places, closed spaces with poor air flow, and settings where people are talking close together.

- Improve air flow. Open windows and doors and avoid indoor spaces with poor air flow. See COVID-19 & Indoor Air Quality at Home Ventilation Tips for more information.

- Choose outdoor spaces for social and fitness activities.

- Wash your hands and/or use hand sanitizer often. Especially after being in public spaces where surfaces are touched by many people.

- Stay home when you are sick.

See ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk for more tips.

How can I get vaccinated against COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccinations are widely available across LA County without an appointment. Visit www.VaccinateLACounty.com and click on “How To Get Vaccinated” to find a location near you. If you need help making an appointment, need transportation to a vaccination site, or are homebound, you can call 1-833-540-0473 from 8am to 8:30pm 7 days a week. Information is also available in multiple languages 24/7 by calling 2-1-1. Vaccinations are always free and available to everyone age 5 and over, regardless of immigration status.

Can I travel?

Do not travel if you are sick or are in either isolation or quarantine. If you are fully vaccinated, you can travel. If you are not fully vaccinated it is best to defer travel until you are fully vaccinated. If you do choose to travel, you should follow the CDC domestic or international travel guidance. Depending on whether you are vaccinated and where you are traveling, you may need to test pre and post travel and quarantine upon return from travel. See the LAC DPH Travel Advisory and Guidance for more details.

² The WHO Emergency Use Listing (EUL) includes the following COVID-19 vaccines: Pfizer-BioNTech (e.g., COMIRNATY, Tozinameran), Moderna, Johnson & Johnson (Janssen), AstraZeneca-Oxford (e.g., Covishield, Vaxzevria), Sinopharm, Sinovac, and Covaxin. See WHO website for the most current list.
I’m still feeling stressed about COVID-19 – what can I do?

As the world continues to combat COVID-19, you may feel concerned, worried, and fearful for your health and the health of your loved ones., financial troubles, lifestyle changes and other factors may also cause added stress. Be sure to watch for signs of distress, engage in regular self-care, and seek out help when needed.

If you or someone you know is having a hard time coping, help is available 24/7 by calling the LA County Department of Mental Health’s Helpline 1-800-854-7771. You can also text “LA” to 741741 or talk to your doctor. The webpage [http://dmh.lacounty.gov/resources](http://dmh.lacounty.gov/resources) includes tips to help manage stress and improve your emotional health.

LA County residents have free access to [iPrevail.com](http://www.iprevail.com), an online mental health resource to help with life’s everyday stressors. After a short assessment, you are connected to customized support which may include on-demand chat with peer coaches, self-paced lessons to improve wellbeing, and community support groups. iPrevail is available 24/7 offered in English and Spanish.

Where can I get reliable information about COVID-19?

There is a lot of misinformation about COVID-19. Check trusted sources for accurate information about COVID-19, including the following:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health:
  - COVID-19 information: [ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus](http://ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus)
  - COVID-19 vaccination:
    - [VaccinateLACounty.com](http://www.vaccinatelacounty.com) for FAQs and factsheets, information on How to Get Vaccinated, and more.
    - DPH Vaccine Call Center **1-833-540-0473** 8am to 8:30pm daily or **2-1-1** (open 24/7) for help with getting vaccinated.

- California Department of Public Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Look out for COVID-19 scams

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, scammers are still at work to cheat people out of money. To learn more about how to avoid a scam and what to do if you are a victim of a scam, visit the DPH [COVID-19 Scams and Fraud](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) webpage.