

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Recent Updates:

11/13/20: Updated information on what to do if you have symptoms, how COVID-19 is spread, as well as who is required to be in isolation and quarantine. Mental health resources added.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of the novel (new) coronavirus in Los Angeles County. The following recommendations are for In Home Supportive Service (IHSS) personnel assisting with activities of daily living such as:

- House Cleaning
- Meal preparation / Feeding
- Laundry
- Personal care services (i.e., toileting, oral care, bathing, and grooming)

1. How is COVID-19 spread?

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

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

COVID-19 may also spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes but this is not thought to be the main way the virus 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 people becoming severely ill, some needing hospitalization, or dying. People over the age of 65, and those with underlying medical conditions, are at especially high risk. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include the following: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, diarrhea, and nausea or vomiting. This list of symptoms is not all inclusive.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 talk to a healthcare provider and get a test for COVID-19. You should stay home and protect others until you get the result of your COVID-19 test or until your provider tells you that you don't have COVID-19. For more information, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare.

If you develop other worrying symptoms that are not on the list, please consult your provider.

If you test positive for COVID-19 or your doctor thinks that you have COVID-19, you must follow the [Home Isolation Instructions](#) closely.

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3. Can I get tested for COVID-19?

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/](https://www.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 [Guidance Based on Test Results](#) for more information.

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

Hand washing:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, before and after any caregiving activities, and especially after you remove gloves or other protective clothing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Wear appropriate barriers during caregiving activities:

Gloves:

Wear disposable gloves for all caregiving activities and general cleaning activities, especially when you might have contact with:

- Blood
- Body fluids
- Secretions (such as saliva during oral care)
- Excretions (such as feces or urine during toileting care)
- Non-intact skin
- Surfaces or linens soiled with blood or other infectious materials

Facemasks:

Wear a disposable facemask during caregiving activities if the client has a respiratory illness, otherwise be sure to wear a cloth face covering at all times while around others. Be sure to place a mask or a cloth face covering on the client as well during these activities. It is important to note that cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, or is otherwise unable to remove the mask or cloth face covering without assistance.

Those instructed not to wear a cloth face covering by a medical provider are also exempt from wearing one.

Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after use. Do not reuse.

- When removing gloves and mask, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of the facemask, and immediately wash your hands again with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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Aprons/Gowns:

Consider using a plastic reusable or washable gown or apron and disinfect between uses

- For caregiving activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated.
- For high-contact care activities, including bathing that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of the caregiver.

Bathing/Toileting:

- When feasible, consider giving bed baths to patients with respiratory illness symptoms to avoid splashes and getting masks wet.
- Close the lid of the toilet or commode prior to flushing to avoid spraying or splashing.

Laundering:

- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, wash and dry items using the hottest setting appropriate for the fabric.
- Avoid shaking out laundry.
- If laundry is soiled, wear disposable gloves and keep the soiled items away from your body while laundering. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
- Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

Feeding:

- Wash hands prior to meal preparation and wear appropriate barriers including gloves & mask if the patient is ill during feeding. Wear gloves while washing utensils and wash hands after removing gloves.

House cleaning:

- Clean & disinfect frequently touched surfaces. This includes tables, doorknobs, lightswitches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. For more information see the Public Health Guide "[Preventing the Spread of Respiratory Illness in the Home.](#)"

5. What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 symptoms?

Immediately contact your facility or regular health care provider for guidance and evaluation.

- Stay home if you are sick. Try to get someone else to care for the patient
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- Talk to a healthcare provider and get a test for COVID-19.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 or a provider thinks that you have COVID-19, stay isolated at home until at least 10 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 1 day after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications AND your symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved. See ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation for more information. If you test negative for COVID-19 or your provider tells you that you don't have COVID-19, stay home until you have been fever-free without the help of fever-reducing medicines for at least 24 hours and your symptoms have improved.

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- If you live with the patient and there are no other caregivers, minimize time spent in the patient's room and use a separate bathroom if possible.
- Wear a mask during caregiving activities and place a mask on the patient as well if it is safe to do so.
- Avoid sharing personal household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with others in the home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables regularly.

If you test positive for COVID-19, tell all of your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. See the public health guidance on [home quarantine \(ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine\)](https://www.ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) for additional information on who is considered a close contact and what they must do.

6. What if I may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but don't have symptoms?

- If you are a close contact, you will need to quarantine yourself for 14 days and call your healthcare provider to discuss getting tested. See the public health guidance on [home quarantine](https://www.ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) for additional information on who is considered a close contact and what they must do.
- If you are not a close contact of someone with lab confirmed COVID-19, there is no need to do anything other than practice everyday prevention measures and physical (social) distancing, and monitor yourself for symptoms such as fever and cough.
- If you have been in contact with someone who was a contact of someone else with COVID-19, but who did not have symptoms (i.e. contact of a contact), you are not considered to be exposed to COVID-19. There is no need to do anything other than practice everyday prevention and physical (social) distancing.

7. What if I am stressed about COVID-19?

When you hear, read, or watch the news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, it is normal to feel anxious and show signs of stress. It is important to care for your own physical and mental health. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)'s [COVID-19 webpage](https://www.lacounty.gov/211la) 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](https://www.cdc.gov/stress/). 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.

8. Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. Visit Public Health's COVID-19 scams webpage ([ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams](https://www.ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams)) for information and resources on how to [avoid](#)

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[COVID-19 health care scams](#). Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by the LA County Department of Public Health. The website has additional information on COVID-19, including a guide to coping with stress.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.
- Call 2-1-1