

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Individuals with HIV

Recent Updates:

7/1/20: Removed instructions to delay routine medical and lab visits. Updated the everyday precautions and the eligibility periods for Ryan White services

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of the disease caused by the novel (new) coronavirus in Los Angeles County. Public Health would like to provide you with some general information about COVID-19, as well as specific measures persons with HIV should take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has issued an “Interim Guidance on COVID-19 and Persons with HIV,” which highlights the following information and considerations for persons living with HIV and their providers:

- The limited data that is currently available does not indicate that COVID-19 in persons with HIV differs from that in persons without HIV. Before effective antiretroviral therapy (ART), advanced HIV infection (i.e., CD4 cell count $<200/\text{mm}^3$) was a risk factor for complications of other respiratory infections. Whether this is also true for COVID-19 is not yet known.
- Some people with HIV have other comorbidities (e.g., cardiovascular disease or lung disease) that increase the risk of having more serious outcomes with COVID-19 illness. Chronic smokers are also at risk of more severe disease.
- **Therefore, until we know more, it is important that all persons with HIV, especially those with advanced HIV or poorly controlled HIV, take steps to help protect themselves from COVID-19.**
- Every effort should be made to help persons with HIV maintain an adequate supply of ART and all other necessary medications.
- Influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations should be kept up to date.
- Maintain on-hand at least a 30-day supply—and ideally a 90-day supply—of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs and other medications.
- Talk to pharmacists and/or healthcare providers about changing to mail-order delivery of medications when possible.
- Talk to health care providers about the risks and benefits of having an in-person versus remote (e.g. telehealth) clinic visit. Factors to consider include the extent of local COVID-19 transmission, the health needs that will be addressed during the appointment, and the person’s HIV status (e.g., CD4 cell count, HIV viral load) and overall health.
- Telephone or virtual visits for routine or non-urgent care and adherence counseling may replace face-to-face encounters.

Refer to the full [DHHS guidance](#), which is comprehensive and includes information for persons with HIV who have fever or respiratory symptoms and are seeking care.

Public Health recommends that individuals at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 take the following actions to reduce their risk of getting sick with the disease:

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- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Take everyday preventive actions:
 - Avoid crowded places and give yourself space from others.
 - Keep interactions with non-household members short.

 - Avoid close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, toys, or sports equipment.
 - Wear a cloth face covering whenever you are outside of your home and around others who are not part of your household.
 - Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
 - Continue to take your regularly prescribed medication.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or using the restroom.
 - If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid or clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often using a regular household cleaning product.
- **Since we are currently experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak in LA County, we recommend you stay home** as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed and practice significant social distancing when you are out of your home and at work (remaining 6 ft. apart from others and wear a cloth face covering when you are close to anyone outside your household unit).
- **Maintain your social networks remotely** via video chat, online or by phone. This can help you stay socially connected and mentally healthy. Reach out for assistance if you are ill and need to stay isolated at home.
- **Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications** to have on hand in case you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- **Some types of HIV medicine are being evaluated as possible treatments for COVID-19. Multiple clinical trials of HIV medicines are underway but until more is known about the effects of these medicines on COVID-19, people with HIV should not switch their HIV medicine in order to prevent or treat COVID-19.**

For Persons with HIV Receiving Assistance through the Ryan White or AIDS Drug Assistance Program

In order to ensure you have access to your medication, the California Department of Public Health has implemented the following, as of March 13, 2020:

- Temporary removal of the restriction for a maximum 30-day supply for uninsured clients;
- Temporary removal of refill restrictions; and
- Eligibility extensions for clients whose eligibility would expire between March – August 30, 2020.

Similarly, for any person in Los Angeles County receiving Ryan White services, your service eligibility has been extended until August 30, 2020.

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Resources:

United States Department of Health and Human Services “Interim Guidance on COVID-19 and Persons with HIV.” <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/8/covid-19-and-persons-with-hiv--interim-guidance-/0>

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health: Check our website for the accurate information and resources (including guidance documents for particular settings (e.g., schools, clinics, venues), FAQs, and tips for coping): <http://ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/#>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “COVID-19: What People with HIV Should Know”
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/hiv.html>

California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS “COVID-19 Update: ADAP Network Pharmacies with Mail Order or Delivery Services.” https://cdph.magellanrx.com/external/commercial/cdph/doc/en-us/CDPH_network_pharmacies_mailorder_delivery.pdf

California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS “Permanent Update to AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) Medication Mail-Order Policy for Out of State or Country Requests”
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DOA/Pages/OA_ADAP_Management_Memo_2020_13_Permanent_Update_to_ADAPs_Medication_Mail_Order_Policy_for_Out_of_State_or_Country_Requests.aspx

