

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can change into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the new coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease known as COVID-19.

2. How are coronaviruses spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing, and talking
- 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

Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

3. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and death.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include one or more of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell. This list of symptoms is not complete. Please talk to your medical provider about any of these or other symptoms that are severe or concern you.

4. What should I do if I have these symptoms?

If you get fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or your provider tells you that you are likely to have COVID-19, you should follow the *Home Isolation Instructions* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). These include staying home for at least 10 days from when your symptoms first appeared AND at least 1 day (24 hours) after your fever has gone without the use of medications AND your symptoms (such as cough and shortness of breath) have improved.



Key Points

- COVID-19 is spread through close contact or by touching an object or surface with the virus on it.
- The best protection is to:
 - Wash your hands frequently
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Self-isolate if you are sick
 - Quarantine if you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19
 - Practice physical distancing
 - Wear a cloth face covering
- People who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 should get a test.

For more information:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Call 2-1-1

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Be sure to tell all of your [close contacts](#) that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. See the *Home Quarantine Instructions for Close Contacts to COVID-19* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) for additional guidance.

People with symptoms other than fever, cough or shortness of breath should talk to their provider about whether they might have COVID-19 and whether they should stay isolated at home.

Older adults, and those with weak immune systems or underlying health problems who experience COVID-19 symptoms should call their doctor early, even if they have mild symptoms.

People with emergency warning signs that include: difficulty breathing, chest pain or pressure, bluish lips or face, confusion or difficulty waking up should call 9-1-1 immediately or go to an emergency room. If it is not urgent, call your doctor before going in to seek care.

For more guidance, read *Learn About Symptoms & What To Do If You Are Sick* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare)

5. What should I do if I think I may have been exposed to COVID-19?

Check to see if you meet criteria for being a close contact in the [Home Quarantine Instructions for Close Contacts to COVID-19](#). If you meet criteria follow the instructions in that guide.

If you don't meet the criteria to quarantine but you had close contact (within 6 feet for greater than 15 minutes) with non-household members who were not wearing face coverings you should consider yourself possibly exposed to COVID-19 and stay at home for 14 days and monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms. If you live with anyone who is over 65 or has an underlying health problem try to stay at least 6 feet away from them, wear a face covering even at home, and wash your hands and clean high-touch surfaces often during the 14 days. If you do get symptoms within the 14 days, call your medical provider and think about getting tested.

6. Should I get tested for the coronavirus?

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 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.

People who do not have symptoms do not need to get tested for COVID-19 unless they are a close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

7. How is COVID-19 treated?

There is no cure for the illness caused by COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's condition.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent novel coronavirus. Be aware of scam products for sale that make false claims to prevent or treat this infection. For more information see [COVID Scams and Fraud](#).

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

There are steps that everyone can take daily to [reduce the risk](#) of getting sick or infecting others with COVID-19.

You should:

- Practice [social or physical distancing](#). Whenever you are out, keep 6 feet apart from everyone else as much as possible.
- Avoid crowded places and give yourself space from others
- Keep interactions with non-household members short
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, toys, or sports equipment.
- Avoid or clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often using a regular household cleaning product.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your elbow (not your hands).
- Increase ventilation - go outside or open windows if it is safe to do so.
- Wear a cloth face covering whenever you are outside of your home and around others who are not part of your household. People with underlying health conditions have a much greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19. It is very important for the County's vulnerable residents to stay at home as much as possible and have groceries and medicine delivered.

9. Should I wear a facemask?

People with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have COVID-19 should use a surgical facemask (if available) or a cloth face covering when they need to leave their home for medical appointments. Cloth face coverings should be used by the general public to cover the nose and mouth when they leave their home. Wearing a face covering is in no way a substitute for social distancing and other prevention measures like washing your hands regularly. These face coverings are used to help protect others in case you have COVID-19 and are not showing signs of infection.

Infants and children under the age of 2 should not wear cloth face coverings. Those between the ages of 2 and 8 should use them but only under adult supervision to ensure the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation. Anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious or otherwise unable to remove the mask or cloth face covering without help or who has been instructed by their medical provider not to wear it for medical reasons should not wear one. See [Cloth Face Covering Guidance](#) for more information.

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

10. Is it safe to travel?

Travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, so staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick. Airports, bus stations, train stations, and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus in the air and on surfaces and it can be hard to keep 6 feet apart from other people. If you are thinking of traveling, consider the following:

- Is COVID-19 spreading where you're going?
- Are you, or anyone you are traveling with, visiting, or spending time with at your destination or when you return home, more likely to get very ill from COVID-19?
- Does the country, state, or local government where you are traveling to or returning to require you to stay home for 14 days after traveling?
- If you are required to stay home or if you get sick with COVID-19, will you have to miss work or school?

Do not travel if you are sick, or if you have been around someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days

If you must travel, protect yourself and others by following the steps in "Q 8, What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?" and the tips for preparing for travel on the CDC [Travel](#) webpage. This webpage also explains the risks from different types of travel.

11. How do I know when work, public spaces, or businesses are safely opening?

Visit the Public Health website to see [What's open in Los Angeles County](#). It is a good idea to **check online or call and ask about safety measures before visiting a business**.

Even though some places are now open, it is important to remember that the virus has not changed and COVID-19 remains a serious risk. It is still easily spread among people in close contact with each other. You can help [reduce the risk](#) of COVID-19 by continuing to practice social (physical) distancing, wear a cloth face covering whenever you are around others, and wash your hands frequently. Also, remember to stay home if you are sick or if you have been in close contact with someone who is sick.

12. What can I do if I get stressed about COVID-19?

When you hear, read, or watch news about COVID-19, it is normal to feel anxious and overwhelmed. It is important to care for your mental as well as your physical health. For tips on what you can do to help cope, read "[Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)". To talk to someone, call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771 or call 2-1-1.

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

13. What can I do if I am feeling harassed or discriminated against?

The County is committed to assuring that all residents affected by COVID-19 are treated with respect and compassion and that we all separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. The outbreak is no excuse for spreading racism and discrimination. If you are being harassed or experiencing discrimination based on race, nation of origin or other identities, you should report it. 2-1-1 takes reports (by phone or online) of hate crimes, hate acts, and incidents of bullying that have occurred within Los Angeles County regardless of whether or not a crime has been committed. Call 2-1-1 or file a report online at <https://www.211la.org/resources/service/hate-crimes-reporting-22>.

14. What else can I do?

- Find a healthcare provider if you don't already have one. If you need help finding a doctor, the 24/7 LA County information line can help - call 2-1-1 or visit the [211 website](#).
- Be prepared with food and essential supplies to last 14 days in case you need to isolate yourself or quarantine.
- Always check with trusted sources for up-to-date, accurate information about novel coronavirus.
 - Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - 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, call 2-1-1.