

COVID-19

Recent Updates:

1/12/21: Updated to reflect new policy requiring quarantine for 10 days and self-check for symptoms from Day 11 to Day 14 after exposure to COVID-19 or travel.

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.

Latest updates highlighted in yellow, below.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health warns that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is widespread throughout the county and asks everyone to help protect themselves and our community. We urge you to be informed and prepared and do your part to stop the surge of COVID-19!

The following advice is for In Home Supportive Service (IHSS) personnel assisting with household tasks and 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 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. 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 it to others.

Any activity that brings individuals into contact with other people, especially in enclosed or crowded areas, adds to risk of spread.

2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, feeling tired, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, diarrhea, and nausea or vomiting but other symptoms may appear as well. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to people becoming very sick sometimes leading to hospitalization or even death. People over the age of 65, and those with health conditions, are at especially high risk.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, contact your doctor and get a test for COVID-19. You should stay home and away from others until you get your COVID-19 test results or until your doctor tells you that you don't have COVID-19. For more information, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare.

Call your doctor if you get other symptoms that worry you but are not on the list.

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

3. Can I get tested for COVID-19?

People with symptoms of coronavirus should get tested. If you are feeling new symptoms that you think may be from coronavirus, let your doctor know and ask about getting tested. You can also visit [covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/](https://www.covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/) or call 2-1-1 to schedule an appointment for free testing.

You should get tested if you have been in [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19. This is to see if you are infected and could have infected others. Because you are a close contact, you must quarantine at home for 10 days from the last exposure. Note that this is a change from past guidance, which required quarantine for 14 days. Under current rules, you can end your quarantine after Day 10 if no symptoms have developed and if you monitor your health and are extra careful with regular COVID-19 precautions from Day 11 through Day 14. Regular precautions are wearing a face covering at all times you are around others, keeping 6 feet away from others, and washing your hands often. You will need to quarantine for the full 10 days even if your test is negative. See the public health guidance on [home quarantine](#) for more information. Note that current rules also call for anyone who arrives in or comes back to Los Angeles County after travel outside of Southern California to quarantine at home or a place of residence. The rules for quarantine are the same but apply if you have traveled whether or not you know you have been exposed to an infected person.

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

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, everyone should practice these actions:

Hand washing:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done before and after any caregiving activities and after you take off gloves or other protective clothing.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not on hand.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Wear appropriate protection during caregiving activities:

Gloves:

Wear disposable gloves for all caregiving 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)
- Broken skin
- Surfaces or linens soiled with blood or other infectious materials

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Facemasks:

Wear a single-use facemask during caregiving activities if the patient has a respiratory illness, otherwise wear a cloth face covering at all times when around others. Be sure to place a mask or a cloth face covering on the patient during these activities. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, or is unable to remove it without help. Those who are told not to wear a cloth face covering by a doctor should use a face shield with a drape attached to the bottom.

Throw out single-use facemasks and gloves after each use. Do not reuse.

- When removing gloves and mask, first take off and throw out gloves. Then, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer right after. Next, take off and throw out the facemask, and wash your hands again with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as soon as you are done.

Aprons/Gowns:

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

- For care activities where splashes and sprays may happen
- For caregiving activities that require direct contact with a client such as bathing

Bathing/Toileting:

- When possible, give bed baths to patients with respiratory illness symptoms to avoid splashes and getting masks wet. When possible, close the lid of the toilet before flushing to avoid spraying or splashing.

Laundering:

- Wash items following the manufacturer's label instructions. If possible, wash and dry items using the hottest setting stated for the fabric.
- Avoid shaking out laundry.
- If laundry is soiled, wear disposable gloves and keep the soiled items away from your body while washing. Wash your hands right after taking off gloves.
- Dirty laundry from a person that is sick can be washed with other people's items.

Feeding:

- Wash hands before making meals and wear the right protective equipment including gloves and a mask if the patient is ill during feeding. Wear gloves while washing utensils and wash hands after taking off gloves.

House cleaning:

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched regularly. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, 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.](#)"

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

If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms, you should call your doctor and ask for advice.

- 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.
- Get a test for COVID-19.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, isolate at home until at least 10 days have passed after your symptoms first started AND at least 1 day after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines AND your symptoms have improved. See ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation for more information. If you test negative for COVID-19 or your doctor tells you that you don't have COVID-19, stay home until you are fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medicines for at least 24 hours and your symptoms have improved.
- If you live with the patient and there are no other caregivers, limit 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 if it is safe to do so.
- Avoid sharing personal household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with others. After using these items, they should be washed with soap and water.
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.

If you test positive for COVID-19, tell all of your close contacts that they need to quarantine for 10 days after their last contact with you. See the home quarantine for close contacts (ph.lacounty.gov/covid/quarantine) for more information.

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 for 10 days from the last exposure. You can end your quarantine after Day 10 if no symptoms have developed and if you monitor your health and are extra careful with regular COVID-19 precautions from Day 11 through Day 14. This is a change from past rules that required 14 days of quarantine. Regular precautions include wearing a face covering when around others, staying at least 6 feet away from others, and washing your hands often. It is advised that you get tested to check if you are infected. If you test negative, you still need to quarantine for 10 days. See the public health guidance on [home quarantine](#) for additional information on who is considered a close contact and what they must do. Again, as noted above, you must also quarantine if you have traveled to Los Angeles County after being outside of Southern California whether you are a new arrival or as a resident returning home.
- If you are not a close contact of someone with COVID-19, there is no need to do anything other than [practice everyday prevention](#) 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 they 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.

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

It is normal to feel anxious or stress when you hear, read, or watch the news about COVID-19. 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](#) and the 211LA webpage (211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health) provide local resources to help with mental health and wellbeing concerns. LA County residents have free access to [Headspace Plus](#). This is a collection of mindfulness and meditation resources in English and Spanish. It also has movement and sleep exercises to help manage stress, fear, and anxiety related to COVID-19. Guidance and resources are also available on the CDC webpage, [Coping with 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. You can also text "LA" to 74174.

8. Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes about COVID-19. Visit Public Health's COVID-19 scams webpage (ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams) for information and tips on how to [avoid COVID-19 health care scams](#). Accurate information, including notices of new cases in LA County, will always be shared by the LA County Department of Public Health. The website has additional information on COVID-19.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - Social media: @lapublichealth
- Call 2-1-1