

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed. Stay at home, as much as possible, except for essential needs. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet). This occurs through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

There are effective ways to practice **physical distancing** to reduce the risk to yourself and the people you care about:

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Stay at home** when you are sick.
- **Avoid close contact** (within 6 feet) with others.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) and immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently** touched objects and surfaces.
- **Follow** our [physical distancing activity guidance](#).

Symptoms and Severity Illness can be severe and require hospitalization, but most individuals recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids, and taking pain and fever-reducing medications. These symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure and can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, including early or mild symptoms, you should be in isolation and stay away from others until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND
- At least 7 days have passed since your specimen was collected

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 and are not tested or tested negative, including early or mild symptoms, you should be in isolation and stay away from others until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately.

Emergency warning signs include*:

- Difficulty getting enough air
- Chest pain
- Change in alertness or responsiveness
- Bluish lips or face
- Rapid breathing

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

For more information, visit our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) page.