

COVID-19 Prevention

Definition

- COVID-19 is a viral respiratory infection. It may be widespread in your community
- Because it can be serious, you don't want your family to catch it
- Here are some tips on how to protect your family
- **Updated: September 7, 2022** (version 18)

Health Information

COVID-19 - How it is Spread

- COVID-19 is spread from person to person.
- The virus spreads from respiratory droplets produced when a person coughs, sneezes, shouts or sings. The infected droplets can then be inhaled by a nearby person or land on the surface of their face or eyes.
- Most infected people also have respiratory secretions on their hands. These secretions get transferred to healthy people on doorknobs, faucet handles etc. The virus then gets transferred to healthy people when they touch their face or rub their eyes.
- These methods are how most respiratory viruses spread.

COVID-19 Facts

- **COVID-19 Symptoms:** The most common symptoms are cough and fever. Some patients progress to shortness of breath. Other common symptoms are chills, shivering (shaking), runny nose, sore throat, muscle pains or body aches, headache, and loss of smell and taste. The CDC also includes the following less common symptoms: fatigue (tiredness), nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Some people may have very mild symptoms. Some can have no symptoms, but still spread the disease.
- **Incubation Period:** average 5 days (range 2 to 10 days) after coming in contact with the secretions of a person who has COVID-19.
- **No Symptoms but Infected:** Over 30% of infected patients have no symptoms.
- **Mild Infections:** 80% of those with symptoms have a mild illness, much like normal flu or a bad cold. The symptoms usually last 2 weeks.
- **Severe Infections:** 20% of those with symptoms that are not vaccinated develop trouble breathing from viral pneumonia. Many of these need to be admitted to the hospital. People with complications generally recover in 3 to 6 weeks. Severe infections are very rare in people who are up to date with vaccines and get all the recommended boosters when eligible.
- **Deaths:** Children generally have a mild illness and recover quickly. Pediatric deaths are very rare. Older adults, especially those with chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, obesity or weak immune systems, have the highest death rates. The overall adult death rate is around 2 per 1000.
- **Vaccine:** Safe and highly effective vaccines are available. At this time, vaccines have been tested and are FDA approved for children 6 months and older. During the first 6 months, babies are usually protected by antibodies from their mother. This is true if she is up-to-date on her COVID-19 vaccines.
- **Breakthrough cases** are COVID-19 infections that happen despite vaccine protection. They are more common with new variants. Most do not cause serious symptoms. The vaccine prevents almost all hospital admissions and deaths.
- **Booster Vaccines:** The CDC recommended a booster shot for those 5 years and older. Stay up to date by getting all recommended boosters when eligible. These booster shots may reduce the rate of COVID-19 breakthrough infections.
- **Treatment:** New treatments for severe COVID-19 are available. They are mainly used for hospitalized patients and high-risk patients.

Trusted Sources for Accurate COVID-19 Information - CDC and AAP

- To meet the high demand for COVID-19 information, when possible, find your answers online. Here are the most reliable websites:

- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- American Academy of Pediatrics parent website: www.healthychildren.org
- Always follow the most current CDC recommendations if they are different than those in this document.

Care Advice

1. **COVID-19 Vaccine - Get Your COVID-19 Shot and a Booster:**
 - Vaccines have saved more lives than any other public health action. They are the most powerful weapon we have against deadly infectious diseases. Follow the science.
 - Safe and effective vaccines are now available for people age 6 months and older
 - If you have the chance to get a COVID-19 vaccine and a booster, get one. It could save your life and protect your family.
 - Vaccine Sites. Find a nearby vaccine site at vaccines.gov or call your doctor during office hours.
2. **COVID-19 - How to Protect Yourself and Family from Catching It - The Basics:**
 - Get the COVID-19 vaccine and a booster(s) when eligible. It is your best protection against this serious infection.
 - If community spread is high, avoid close contact with people outside your family unit. Avoid crowded places.
 - If you can't avoid these places, always wear a face mask. Also, observe social (safe) distancing.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water (very important). Always do before you eat.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if water is not available. Remember: soap and water work better.
 - Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean. Germs on the hands can get into your body this way.
 - Don't share glasses, plates or eating utensils.
 - No longer shake hands. Greet others with a smile and a nod.
 - If your child needs to be seen for an urgent medical problem, do not hesitate to go in. ERs and urgent care sites are safe places. They are well equipped to protect you against the virus. For non-urgent conditions, talk to your doctor's office first. Medical offices are also safe places.
3. **Social Distancing and COVID-19 Prevention:**
 - Avoid any contact with people known to have COVID-19 infection. Avoid talking to or sitting close to them.
 - **Social Distancing:** Try to stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from anyone who is sick, especially if they are coughing. Also called physical distancing. If community spread is high, avoid crowds because you can't tell who might be sick.
 - Also wear a mask when entering any public building or outdoor crowded area.

4. **Face Masks and COVID-19 Prevention:**

- Mask requirements have been reduced in most parts of our country. The CDC website can tell you the COVID-19 community level in any county in the US. Your county will be listed as High, Medium, or Low. High means everyone should wear a mask indoors in public. Medium means people at high risk for serious illness should wear a mask. Low means masks are not needed. Go to the www.covid.gov website and click on "Check Your County".
- **Overview:** Face masks are essential for reducing the spread of COVID-19. Reason: People with COVID-19 can have no symptoms, but still spread the virus. Masks also will reduce the spread of flu.
- Because of COVID-19 variants such as Omicron, mask wearing is still recommended if COVID-19 area spread is high. Mask wearing is even more important if you have health problems.
- **Sick People:** Must always wear a face mask if you are around other people or need to leave home. Example: for medical visits. Exception: Patients with trouble breathing in a mask can consider a loose face covering such as a bandana.
- **Well People Should Wear Masks if:**
 - You are in indoor public spaces (such as a church or a grocery store).
 - You are in a crowded outdoor setting (e.g., concert, music festival, rally).
 - You are traveling on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transit.
 - You are in a transit hub such as an airport or train station.
 - You must be around someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- **Well People Exceptions:** Face mask or covering is optional if outdoors.
- **Age Limits:** Face coverings also are not recommended for children under 2 years (CDC).

5. **Keep Your Mind and Body Strong:**

- Get your body ready to fight the COVID-19 virus.
- Get enough sleep (very important)
- Keep your heart strong. Walk or exercise every day. Take the stairs. Go outdoors if you can. Caution: avoid physical exhaustion.
- Think positive thoughts.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Eat healthy meals.
- Avoid the over-use of anti-fever medicines. Fever fights infections and ramps up your immune system.

6. **How to Protect Others - When You or Your Child are Sick or had a Positive COVID-19 Test:**

- **Stay home for at least 5 full days:** Do not allow visitors.
- **Wear a Mask for 10 days:** Wear a face mask when around others or if you have to go to a medical facility.
- **Children under 2 years:** Home isolation will be needed for a full 10 days. Reason: they don't wear masks.
- **Do NOT go to School or Work:** Don't go to stores, restaurants, places of worship or other public places. Avoid public transportation or ride sharing. Leave the house only if you need to seek medical care. Your doctor or local health department will tell you when it is safe to return.
- **Cover the Cough:** Cough and sneeze into your shirt sleeve or inner elbow. Don't cough into your hand or the air. If available, sneeze into a tissue and throw it into trash can.
- **Wash Hands Often with Soap and Water:** After coughing or sneezing are important times.
- **Don't Share Personal Household Items:** Don't share glasses, plates or eating utensils.
- Avoid contact with people over the age of 65 and people with weak immune systems or other chronic health problems.

Call Your Doctor If

- You think you or your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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