COVID-19

What to do if you have confirmed or possible coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

State of Illinois

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected to have COVID-19 because you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Symptoms of COVID-19

People with COVID-19 can have a wide range of symptoms from mild to severe, which can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. COVID-19 symptoms can include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, muscle pain, fatigue, headache, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, and are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact your doctor to be tested. Read about COVID-19 illness and other symptoms here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html.

Among adults, the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk. Those who are pregnant or have medical conditions (like cancer; immunosuppression; heart, lung, or kidney disease; or diabetes) may be at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. Call your physician's office if you are concerned about a medical condition and ask if you need to be evaluated in person. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.

If you think you are having symptoms related to COVID-19, you also can contact a free remote health monitoring program for additional guidance.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are suspected to have COVID-19 but have not been tested, you should follow the instructions below. You may be contacted by public health staff for an interview about your illness.

Manage your symptoms.

Take care of yourself. Get rest and stay hydrated. You can take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen to help you feel better.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people. If available, use a separate bathroom. Additional guidance for persons helping to take care of you at home is available.

Do not handle pets or other animals while sick or if you have tested positive for COVID-19. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the health care provider and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the health care provider's office take steps before you arrive to keep others from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth

You should wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home). You may need to make a cloth face covering using a scarf or bandana.

You do not need to wear the cloth face covering if you are alone. If you cannot put on a cloth face covering (because of trouble breathing, for example), cover your coughs and sneezes in some other way. Try to stay at least 6 feet from other people to help protect them from possible infection.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone unable to remove the covering without help.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in a lined trash can. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 90 percent alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water are preferred if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water are preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions for safe and effective use when applying, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during. See Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for more information.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your health care provider and tell them you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a face mask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the health care provider's office keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

If you experience any of the following warning signs, seek immediate medical care:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

If you need immediate medical attention

If you have a medical emergency, call 911 and notify the dispatch personnel you have, or may have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a face mask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation*

If you think or know you had COVID-19, you can be with others after:

- You have had no fever for at least 24 hours (that is no fever **without** the use of medicine that reduces fever **AND**
- other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) **AND**
- at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

Depending on your health care provider's advice and testing availability, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you are tested, you can be around others when you have no fever, respiratory symptoms have improved, and you receive two negative test results in a row at least 24 hours apart.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms, you can end home isolation after:

- 10 days have passed since your positive COVID-19 test was collected if you have never developed symptoms.
- Depending on your health care provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19.
- If you will be tested, you can be around others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

Note: If you develop symptoms, follow guidance above for people with COVID-19 symptoms.

*The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your health care provider and state and local health departments. Some people, for example those with conditions that severely weaken their immune system or individuals who experienced severe illness, may need to continue home isolation for 20 days.

Additional information for your household members, intimate partners, and caregivers is available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html