

# COVID-19 Prevention and Care Tips



Many people are asking how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, how to take care of yourself if you are sick, and what to do if you find yourself the caregiver for someone with COVID-19. Following is a summary of recommended key steps from NorthShore University HealthSystem and information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases.

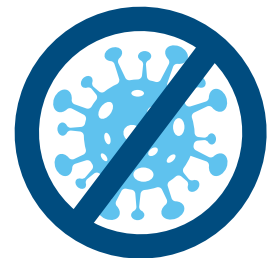
## Prevention Tips

COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact (within about six feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. For more detailed information about COVID-19 from the CDC, please visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html).

### What can I do to protect my health and safety?

There are several things we can all do to remain safe, healthy and vigilant.

- **Clean your hands often.** Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use sanitizer when washing is not available.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** If you do, please wash your hands.
- **Practice social distancing of 6 feet between you and another person.** This means keep space between you and others in public spaces.
- **Avoid contact with people who seem ill.**
- **Avoid social gatherings where social distancing cannot be practiced.** Use technology such as FaceTime/video communication to keep in touch with loved ones.
- **Stay home if you are sick.** Do not return to work until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever without taking fever-reducing medications.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with tissue or in the crook of your arm; throw away used tissue and wash your hands.



# Care Tips

**If YOU are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have it, follow the steps below to help protect other people in your home and community.**

- **If you feel ill and believe you might have COVID-19**, call the NorthShore helpline, (847) HEALTH9, or your healthcare provider's office, or if you are a NorthShore patient, log onto NorthShoreConnect for an e-visit. Symptoms of COVID-19 include:
  - Fever, OR
  - Cough, OR
  - Shortness of breath, OR
  - Decrease in taste or smell



For additional guidance from the CDC visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).

- **Stay home.** If you need medical care, contact your health provider or the NorthShore health hotline at (847) HEALTH9 or if you are a NorthShore patient, you can fill out an e-Visit on NorthShoreConnect. People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Do not leave, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas. Avoid public transportation, taxis or ride-sharing.
  - **Older adults** and people of any age with certain serious underlying medical conditions such as lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should call their health care provider, the NorthShore health hotline (847) Health9 or fill out an e-visit via NorthShoreConnect.
- **Separate yourself from other people in your home**—this is known as home isolation. As much as possible, you should stay in a specific “sick room” and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- **Call ahead before visiting your health provider.** Tell them that you have or think you may have COVID-19; this will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- **As a reminder, testing is being reserved for symptomatic, high-risk individuals.** These are individuals with fever and/or respiratory symptoms, the appropriate travel or contact history or who have significant chronic disease. If you are otherwise healthy with symptoms of fever or respiratory symptoms, please stay home, practice social distancing and use supportive care. Supportive care includes rest, fluids, using fever-reducing medications and practicing social distancing. If you have other questions, please contact your health care provider or the NorthShore health hotline at **(847) HEALTH9** or schedule an e-visit.
- **Wear a facemask** or if you don't have one, use a bandana when around other people, including at home and when you go to a medical office. This protects doctors and other healthcare providers, other patients and the public
- **Stay in touch with your health care provider.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, then wash your hands immediately 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% alcohol.

## Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.** This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Soap and water are the best option**, especially if hands are visibly dirty.
- **If soap and water are not available**, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**



## Household cleanliness recommendations

- **Do not share.** This includes dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.
- **Wash thoroughly after use:** After using any of the above items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water or put in the dishwasher.
- **Clean and disinfect:** Routinely clean high-touch surfaces in your “sick room” and bathroom. High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- **Clean and disinfect areas that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.**
- **Household cleaners and disinfectants:** Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant. For more information please visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html).

## Caring for Someone Who Has COVID-19

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As noted above, older adults and people of any age with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should seek care as soon as symptoms start.



- **Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only a mild illness and should recover at home.** Care at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- **If you are caring for someone at home, monitor for emergency signs** (more below); prevent the spread of germs by using the sanitation steps outlined above; treat symptoms including making sure the sick person drinks plenty of fluids and gets lots of rest, and follow the healthcare provider’s advice. (Be sure you have the contact information for the sick person’s health provider handy.)
- **If a caregiver or other person needs to clean and disinfect a sick person’s bedroom or bathroom**, they should do so on an as-needed basis. The caregiver or other person should wear a mask and rubber or latex gloves, if available, and wait as long as possible after the sick person has used the bathroom. When they have finished cleaning, discard the mask and gloves and practice hand hygiene.

- **If the person who is sick is not able to wear a facemask** (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live in the home should stay in a different room. If caregivers need to enter the room of the sick person, they should wear a facemask. If a facemask is not available, stay at least six feet away from the infected person. Limit all exposure as much as possible. After leaving the room, discard the mask and practice hand hygiene. Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended.

## Monitor Symptoms

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- **If you or the person for whom you are caring** develops emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include\*:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, OR
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest, OR
- New confusion or inability to arouse, OR
- Bluish lips or face

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



- **When seeking medical attention** for yourself or someone you're caring for, first call the health care provider. Tell the provider or emergency room the symptoms; the health provider will tell you what to do.
- **If you are sick, put on a facemask** if possible before you enter any medical building. If you don't have a facemask, try to keep a safe distance of at least six feet from other people to protect others in the office or waiting room
- **Call 911 if you have a medical emergency:** If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the operator that you have or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask or bandana before medical help arrives.

**In all cases, follow the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department. The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your healthcare provider and state and local health departments. Local decisions depend on local circumstances.**

*Sources: Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases*