What to Do If You Are Sick

If You Are Mildly Ill, Stay Home and Call a Health Care Provider

• Stay home to avoid getting others sick. Do not go to work, school, or public places, and avoid public transportation, ridesharing or taxis.

• Call a health care provider for medical advice. Then, follow their advice.

• Call ahead before visiting your doctor or a health care facility. Tell them your symptoms. This information will help them take steps to protect themselves and other patients.

• 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.
  – Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended.
  – Limit contact with pets and animals. According to the CDC, there haven’t been reports of pets or other animals getting sick with COVID-19, but it’s still recommended to limit contact until we know more. When possible, have someone else care for your animals while you are sick.

• To protect others, wear a facemask if you are sick and around other people, or before you enter a health care provider’s office. If you are unable to wear a facemask, caregivers entering your room should wear a facemask.

• Cover your coughs and sneezes. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away used tissues in a lined trash can. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water are always preferable, but if they are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

If you are without a tissue, cough into your upper arm and then wash your upper arm with soap and water or if soap and water is not available use a hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol.

• Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Handwashing is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food. Soap and water are always preferable, but if they are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. When using hand sanitizer, make sure to cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

• Avoid sharing personal household items. Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people in your home. After use, wash items thoroughly with soap and water or put them in the dishwasher.

Clean and Disinfect Household Surfaces Daily and High-Touch Surfaces Frequently Throughout the Day

High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables.

• In Sick Room: On your own, clean and disinfect all surfaces in your sick room and designated bathroom once a day. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in your sick room and designated bathroom frequently throughout the day.

• Rest of the House: Have a healthy household member clean and disinfect all other surfaces in the home (outside the sick room and designated bathroom) once a day. Also, clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in other parts of the home frequently throughout the day.
Clean and Disinfect:


Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

- Clean dirty surfaces first. Use detergent, or soap and water, prior to disinfecting.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfectant products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19, based on data for harder-to-kill viruses.
- Alternatives to EPA-registered disinfectants include:
  - Diluted household bleach: Mix 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water; or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. Make sure you have proper ventilation and that the bleach is not expired.
  - Alcohol solutions: Ensure your solution has at least 70% alcohol.

If Your Symptoms Are Severe or Become Severe, Call First to Get Medical Attention Immediately

- If you develop signs of your illness worsening or of a life-threatening condition, get medical attention immediately. Before going to the doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them your symptoms. They will tell you what to do.
- **Wear a facemask** If possible, put on a facemask when you leave your room. If you don’t have a facemask, wear a bandana or other cloth over your mouth and nose. Keep a safe distance (at least 6 feet away) from other people. This will help protect the people in the office and waiting room.
- **Follow care instructions from your health care provider** and local health department.

If you develop signs of your illness worsening or of a life-threatening condition, get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest.
- Confusion or inability to respond.
- Bluish lips or face.

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

Call 9-1-1 if you have a life-threatening medical emergency: notify the operator that you have or think you might have COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before medical help arrives.

Reference:

cdc.gov