



What to do if you have COVID-19 symptoms and have not been around anyone diagnosed with COVID-19

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If you have symptoms of COVID-19, get in touch with your health care provider within 24 hours and follow the steps below to help prevent your infection from spreading to people in your home and community.

Could I have COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms from mild to severe, which can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus, and 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 any of these symptoms, even if you are not aware of being around anyone with COVID-19, you may have COVID-19 or another respiratory virus. COVID-19 is circulating in many communities, but other respiratory viruses also may be present in your community.

Should I get tested for COVID-19?

Currently, anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 is encouraged to be tested.

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) you may be at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. Call your physician's office and ask if you need to be evaluated. They may want to monitor your health more closely.

If you do not have a high-risk condition and your symptoms are mild, your health care provider can help to decide if you need to be further evaluated. If you think you are having symptoms related to COVID-19, you also can contact a free [remote health monitoring program](#) for additional guidance.

How can I get tested for COVID-19?

There are testing locations listed on the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) website (<http://dph.illinois.gov/testing>) with information and requirements for testing at each site. The IDPH COVID-19 hotline does not assist residents with getting tested and does not make decisions about who should be tested.

What should I do to keep my respiratory infection from spreading to my family and other people in the community?

You should take the following steps to help protect people in your home and community:

Stay home

- 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.
- 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.



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Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the health care provider and tell them you have symptoms consistent with 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 others to help protect them.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone not able 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 95 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 use.

Monitor your symptoms

Call your health care provider if you have:

- Fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other flu-like symptoms that are not better or are worsening after 24-48 hours.
- Mild symptoms and are an older adult or have any of the chronic health conditions listed previously.



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Before seeking in-person care, call your health care provider and tell them about your symptoms. Put on a face mask before you enter any health care facility. These steps will help the health care provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting your infection.

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 have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If possible, put on a face mask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

If you have fever, cough, or [other symptoms of COVID-19](#), even if you have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should stay home away from others until:

- 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.

[People with conditions that weaken their immune system](#) might need to stay home longer than 10 days. Talk to your health care provider for more information.

What is the difference between Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19?

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with [influenza viruses](#). Because some symptoms of the flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share many characteristics, but there are some key differences between the two.

While more is learned every day, there is still a lot that is unknown about COVID-19 and the virus that causes it. This [page](#) compares COVID-19 and flu, given the best available information to date.

Learn more about [how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19](#).

Learn more about [how to protect yourself and others from flu](#) this season.