

Protect Yourself and your Family: CoVID-19

A how-to guide for managing your illness and preventing its spread to others.

Overview

The final treatment plan for any respiratory viral illness is similar and includes over-the-counter medications, home isolation/quarantine to keep from spreading to others, and rest. Below are more details for you to review and options for non-emergency care. These are guidelines for self-care in your home.

Stay home except to get medical care

People who are mildly ill with a viral illness or suspected COVID-19 can isolate at home during their illness. 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 services (Uber®, etc.), or taxis.**

If you have a fever and other signs/symptoms that do not feel like it's an emergency, it may be best for you to "**self-quarantine**". This means you should stay at home to help prevent the spread of the illness to others. Once your fever is gone WITHOUT the use of ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Excedrin®) and you're feeling improvement with your cough and breathing, you should remain self-quarantined for another 3 days (72 hours). In total, you need to self-quarantine for at least 7 days from the time your symptoms started appearing, and for many people, this may need to be even longer.

Alternatives to Emergency Care

Just because you suspect you MIGHT have CoVID-19, you do not absolutely need to have a screening test. The treatment for any viral illness is the same as outlined in this document. If you are established with a healthcare provider, consider calling them for advice during your illness or to ask if further care by an emergency center is needed.

If you feel chest pain, severe difficulty breathing, syncope (fainting), your skin color is pale, or feel this is an emergency, please do not hesitate to call 911 for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or seek reliable transportation to the nearest ER.

Consider contacting the State of Ohio. Go to the website: coronavirus.ohio.gov or call: 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Eat, drink, and keep your immune system strong

Drink plenty of fluids to keep your immune system strong. A fever can take a lot out of you! If you are on fluid restrictions by your doctor, call his or her office for recommendations. You should drink water or other fluids that do not contain alcohol, a lot of caffeine, or a lot of sugar. Water and electrolyte replacements (Gatorade, Powerade, etc.) are best!

Even though you may not be very hungry, you still need to eat. Consider “easy on the stomach” meals and snacks.

Try to get plenty of rest. It’s difficult when you’re sick, but this is not the time to repair your roof, mow the lawn, or other activities that require physical work or a “clear head”.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: Whenever possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends staying **6 feet or more away from others** to help lower the risk for spreading the disease. For right now, it’s best to avoid hugging, handshakes, or other physical contact until you’re healthy again.

Animals: You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.

When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider’s office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Keep tissues with you. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, 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, especially after:

- Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Going to the bathroom
- Before eating or preparing food.

If soap and water are not readily 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.

Soap and water are the best option if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

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.

Dishes, laundry, and other shared items should be washed thoroughly with soap/detergent and water. Washing machines and dishwashers are great!

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday

“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.** Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing, chest pain, serious bleeding, fainting). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19.

If you are calling 911 for EMS assistance, advise them that EMS arrived earlier for a fever and illness. Do not hang up the phone until 911 does, as they need to ask important questions to help you and protect the paramedics and firefighters. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

If going to a healthcare facility (clinic, doctor's office, hospital) put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

As general guidelines: The fever should be gone. Remember that some pain medications such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, and other NSAIDs) and acetaminophen (Tylenol, Excedrin) will bring down a fever, but the virus is still active in your body and can be transmitted to your family.

The fever should be gone for at least 72 hours after the last dose of one of these medications. The cough should also be nearly gone as well. Expect to self-quarantine for at least seven (7) days after the time your symptoms started to appear.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you are concerned that you may have COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

This information is not intended to diagnose or treat any suspected or confirmed disease. Please contact your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns about your illness.

Adapted from:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Homes and Residential Communities - Interim Guidance. Published on February 14, 2020. Access at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Discontinuation of Home Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 (Interim Guidance). Updated on March 16, 2020. Access at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>