

## [Background on the Virus](#)

### **What precautions should I take to avoid COVID-19?**

According to the CDC, you should:

- Practice social distancing by avoiding close contact with others.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Only use a facemask if you are showing symptoms.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid, cancel, or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more.

For more information on the precautions you take, please visit the CDC's website [here](#). The CDC also offers answers to FAQs for Individuals and Families [here](#).

What are the symptoms of coronavirus/COVID-19?

According to the CDC, [symptoms](#) of coronavirus may include:

- Fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

In comparison, common flu [symptoms](#) may include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

**I feel sick. What should I do? Where can I get tested?**

Please read the CDC's detailed recommendations [here](#). If you are suffering from symptoms associated with the coronavirus or believe you've been exposed to someone carrying the disease, the CDC [recommends](#) that you:

- Stay home except to get medical care
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor
- Wear a facemask
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid sharing personal household items
- Clean your hands often
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day
- Monitor your symptoms

For further instructions, contact a medical profession or a community health center. These resources can share information on how and when you can leave self-isolation safely. To prevent the potential spread of the virus, you should **not** show up to a treatment facility unannounced.

Veterans experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should call their VA medical facility or MyVA311 (844-698-2311, press #3) **before** visiting local VA medical facilities, community providers, urgent care centers, or emergency departments in their communities. Veterans can also send secure messages to their healthcare providers via [MyhealthVet](#), VA's online patient portal. VA clinicians will evaluate veterans' symptoms and direct them to the most appropriate providers for further evaluation and treatment. This may include referral to state or local health departments for COVID-19 testing.

### **What should I do to care for someone who has or is afraid that they may have coronavirus?**

Please view the CDC's [recommended precautions for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers](#).

### **I've had contact with an individual with COVID-19. What should I do?**

If you are not sick:

- Monitor your health for fever, cough and shortness of breath for 14 days after your last contact with the ill person.
- Do not go to school or work.
- Avoid public places for 14 days.

If you are sick:

- Call a healthcare provider, particularly if you are a member of a high-risk group
- Isolate yourself.