

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Individuals and Households

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking you to help slow the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). We encourage you to be informed and to review your household plan to help protect your health.

Understand how coronaviruses are spread

When someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes the small droplets from their nose or mouth can travel 3-6 feet. People can get infected if they breathe in these droplets, or the droplets land on their eyes, nose, or mouth. Although people who are sick with COVID-19 are the most infectious, people may spread the virus a few days before they start to feel unwell. It may be possible that a person can also get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

Know the symptoms of COVID-19

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to people becoming severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and dying. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Practice Physical Distancing

Public Health is asking everyone to do their part to help slow the spread of novel coronavirus in our community by practicing physical distancing (also known as social distancing). This means staying home, avoiding crowds, and keeping at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible.

How to practice physical distancing

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Avoid any places where a lot of people are together.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Work or study from home, if possible.
- Do not have visitors over or let your children have playdates.
- Call your doctor or dentist before visiting to find out if they offer telemedicine or phone advice. If you or family members are due for routine immunizations, contact your provider to schedule an appointment.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Avoid public transport, if you can.
- Avoid contact with people – instead of shaking hands, come up with other ways to greet people that don't involve any touching or getting closer than 6 feet.

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If you do use public transport, shop, go to work, or participate in other activities, take precautions to reduce the risks, such as:

- Limit the amount of time you spend in close contact with others.
- Limit the number of different people you spend time with.
- Keep as far away from others as possible, especially if they are coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a cloth face covering at all times when you are out and around other people. Make sure to use it properly - see Public Health's [Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information. Note, a mask or cloth face cover should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove it without assistance. Infants and children under the age of 2 should not wear cloth face coverings. Those between the ages of 2 and 8 should use them but under adult supervision to ensure that the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation.
- Try to go to places at times when they are less busy.
- Avoid touching surfaces in public places, when possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly.
- Clean your hands often, especially after touching surfaces in public places and before eating and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

Additional tips for people with children

- Explain to your children that hand washing can keep them healthy and stop the virus from spreading to others.
- Be a good role model—if you wash your hands often, they're more likely to do the same. See the CDC's guidance: [Handwashing: A Family Activity](#)

How to get food and other necessities

- Have one member of the household go to the store. Go when it is less busy and stock up on essential supplies so that you don't have to go out as often and keep at least 6 feet away from people as much as you can.
- You can use food delivery, drive-thru, or carry out as long as everyone practices physical distancing. When the 'Safer at Home' Health Officer order is changed to allow eat-in dining, make sure to follow Public Health safety rules if you visit a restaurant or cafe.
- If you order something for delivery, if possible, pay and tip electronically and ask for the item to be left outside your door. Remove food from delivery bags and boxes and dispose of the packaging. Wash your hands after handling the packaging.
- If you are at higher risk of getting sick from COVID-19, ask for food, medical supplies, and other essential items to be brought to your door through family, neighbors, or delivery services. Call 2-1-1- if you need assistance getting food and other essential items.

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Additional tips for people with children

- The Los Angeles Unified School District, in conjunction with the Red Cross, provides meals to students through their Grab & Go Food Centers on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Find a location near you at [LAUSD's Resources for Families During School Closure page](#).
- There are also meal distribution sites offered by other school districts throughout Los Angeles County. Search the Student Meal Distribution Sites [here](#) for the address and hours of operation for a site near you.

Tips for coping with physical distancing

- Talk to your employer about options for working from home.
- Exercise at home or outdoors.
- Avoid isolation by using technology and the phone to communicate with friends and family often.
- Take care of one another – check-in by phone with friends, family, and neighbors who are vulnerable to serious illness or have mobility issues. Offer to help, while still following physical distancing guidelines.
- Stay informed through trusted sources for the latest accurate information about novel coronavirus.

Additional tips for people with children

- Help your children stay physically active. Encourage them to play outdoors while practicing physical distancing. Take a walk with them or go on a bike ride. Also, try indoor activity breaks to stretch or move throughout the day to help your children stay healthy and focused.
- Help your children stay socially connected. Reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats. Write cards or letters to family members they may not be able to visit.
- **School at home:** Many schools are offering lessons online (virtual learning).
 - Review assignments from the school, and help your children establish a reasonable pace for completing the work.
 - If you face technology or connectivity issues, or if your child is having a hard time completing assignments, let the school know.
 - Have consistent bedtimes and get up at the same time, Monday through Friday.
 - Structure the day for learning, free time, healthy meals and snacks, and physical activity.
 - Allow flexibility in the schedule—it's okay to adapt based on your day.
 - Look for ways to make learning fun using hands-on activities, like puzzles and drawing.
 - Start a journal with your child to document this time and discuss the shared experience.
 - Check out the [LA County Library](#) resources to gain access to the library at home. There are digital books, audiobooks and hosted online events.
 - **Consider the needs and adjustment required for each of your children based on their ages.** The transition to being at home will be different for preschoolers, K-5, middle school students, and high school students. Talk to them about expectations and how they are adjusting to being at home versus at school.

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Take care of your emotional health

- **Take care of the emotional health of yourself and other household members.** Outbreaks are stressful for everyone, but children may respond differently from adults.
- **Watch for signs of stress in your child:** excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, and difficulty with attention and concentration. For more information, see the “For Parents” section of CDC’s [Stress and Coping](#).
- **Take time to talk with your child about the COVID-19 outbreak.** Answer questions and share facts from CDC’s [Stop the Spread of Rumors](#) guide about COVID-19 in a way that your child can understand.
- **Go to CDC’s resources** [Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#) or [Talking with Children About COVID-19](#).
- **If you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed,** read [Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#) on the Public Health website. For help, talk to your doctor or call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.

Teach your family the importance of taking steps to prevent infection at home

- Wash hands often and do it thoroughly. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for at least 20 seconds.
- Do not share objects such as utensils, cups, food, and drink.

Clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch frequently

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, banisters, countertops, toys, remote controls, faucet handles, and phones. Use the usual cleaning agents and follow the label directions.
- Clean surfaces and items to remove visible dirt and disinfect them to kill germs.
- Follow the instructions on the product labels, including wearing gloves and having good ventilation. Use household cleaners and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface.
- To find out if the product works against viruses, read the product label, call the 1-800 number on the label or visit www.epa.gov.
- A bleach solution can also be used as a disinfectant - mix 4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water, or for a larger supply, add 1/3 cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- For more information see the Public Health Guide [Preventing the Spread of Respiratory Illness in the Home](#).

Know what to do if you become ill

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include some combination of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. This list of symptoms is not all inclusive.

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- If you develop fever, cough, shortness of breath, or your healthcare provider tells you that you are likely to have COVID-19, you should self-isolate at home. If you develop other symptoms listed above or worrying symptoms that are not on the list, please consult your provider about the need for testing and isolation.
- During the current (COVID-19) outbreak, it is likely that many people with cold and flu-like symptoms have COVID-19. Many people will have a mild illness and get better at home. To get a test for COVID-19, call your doctor or visit [covid19.lacounty.gov/testing](https://www.covid19.lacounty.gov/testing).
- People should call their doctor early if they are 65 years and older or have a health problem such as a chronic disease or a weak immune system, because they are at higher risk of serious illness.
- Call your doctor if you have any questions about your illness, or if your symptoms are not going away, or are getting worse.
- If you are having difficulty breathing, feel pain or pressure in your chest, have bluish lips or face or are experiencing a new onset of confusion or difficulty waking up call 911 or go to an emergency room, otherwise call your doctor before going in to seek care.

If you or a family member become ill, it is important that you follow the instructions in the Public Health [Home Care Instructions for People with Respiratory Symptoms](#). The guide contains important information such as

- *Who is most at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19.*
- *When to call a doctor or seek emergency care.*
- *Steps you can take to feel better.*
- *How to protect others – at home, and when you seek medical care.*

Key points include:

- Stay home, except to get medical care.
- Stay home until at least 10 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after you have recovered. Recovery means that your fever is gone for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and your respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved. Even if you get tested and the result is negative, you must remain at home for the full time, to prevent spreading your illness to others.
- Be sure to tell all of your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Close contacts include all household members, any intimate contacts, and all individuals who were within 6 feet of you for more than 10 minutes, starting 48 hours before your symptoms began until your isolation period ends. In addition, anyone who had contact with your body fluids and/or secretions (such as were coughed on/sneezed on, shared utensils or saliva or provided care to you without wearing protective equipment) needs to be in quarantine. See Public Health's [Home quarantine guidance for those exposed to COVID-19](#).

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Prepare your household (or review your household plan if you already have one)

- **Make sure that you know phone numbers** for your doctor's office, local urgent care, and ER facilities so that you can call them if you become sick instead of just showing up. Put important numbers on the fridge and in your phones.
- **If you don't already have a healthcare provider**, the County information line 2-1-1 can help you to find one.
- **Make a plan for taking care of family members** who are elderly, disabled, or sick if they or their caregivers become ill.
- **Create an emergency contact list.** Ensure your household has a current list of emergency contacts for family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, teachers, employers, and other community resources. Know that you can call the LA County information helpline 2-1-1.
- **Get to know your neighbors.** Talk with your neighbors about emergency planning. If your neighborhood has a website or social media page, consider joining it to maintain access to neighbors, information, and resources.
- **Identify aid organizations in your community.** Create a list of local organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you need access to information, health care services, support, and resources. Consider including organizations that provide mental health or counseling services, food, and other supplies. Know that you can call the LA County information helpline 2-1-1.
- **Have adequate supplies of prescription medications** as well as over the counter medicines to help with cold and flu symptoms.
- **For more information** visit the CDC webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

Report Stigma

The County is committed to assuring that all residents affected by COVID-19 are treated with respect and compassion. We must separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. The outbreak is no excuse for spreading racism and discrimination. If you or someone you know experiences discrimination based on race, nation of origin or other identities, please report it. You can report hate crimes, hate acts, and incidents of bullying in Los Angeles County, whether or not a crime has been committed. Call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1 which is available 24/7, or file a report online at: <https://www.211la.org/public-health-and-safety/anti-hate>.

Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news, and hoaxes surrounding COVID-19. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by Public Health through press releases, social media, and our website. The website has more information on COVID-19 including FAQs, infographics and a guide to coping with stress, as well as tips on handwashing.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

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Social media: @lapublichealth

Other reliable sources of information about novel coronavirus are:

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International)
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

**911 is not for
health information!**

