

What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19

If you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath but have not been around anyone with diagnosed COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent your infection from spreading to people in your home and community.

Could I have COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. This is similar to other respiratory viruses. People who live with (e.g., household members), are caring for, or are intimate partners (e.g., sexual partners) with someone who has confirmed or possible COVID-19 infection are at highest risk of getting COVID-19. The risk in other types of settings (e.g., school or work) is thought to be much lower, but is not zero. This is why hand hygiene and social distancing are so important as prevention measures.

Should I go to my doctor and get tested for COVID-19?

If you are over the age of 60 years, are pregnant, or have medical conditions (like cancer, immunosuppression, heart, lung, or kidney disease, and diabetes) you may be at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. Call your physician's office if you are concerned about a medical condition and ask if you need to be evaluated in person. They may want monitor your health more closely or test you for influenza and COVID-19.

If you do not have a high-risk condition and your symptoms are mild, it is very likely you do not need to be evaluated in person and do not need to be tested for COVID-19. There are currently no medications to treat COVID-19. The best thing you can do to protect yourself and others in your community is to stay home while you have mild symptoms.

Can the IDPH COVID-19 hotline help me to get tested for COVID-19?

The IDPH COVID-19 hotline does not assist residents with getting tested and does not make decisions about who should be tested. Please do not contact the COVID-19 hotline for issues related to COVID-testing. These decisions are made by health care providers.

Can a health department help me to get tested for COVID-19?

Health departments do not order COVID-19 tests. Testing is done by health care providers who evaluate patients individually and decide whether testing is needed.

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

Because we are trying to stop the spread of respiratory illnesses, we ask that you take the following steps to help protect people in your home and your community:

Stay home except to get medical care

- 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, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.

- As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

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

If available, 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 avoid being in the same room with you

Cover your coughs and sneezes

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 clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is 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, they should be washed 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% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is 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. 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

Call your health care provider if you have:

- Fever, cough, trouble breathing, 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 above

Your health care provider will determine if you should be tested.

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

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

Discontinuing home isolation

If you have fever, cough or shortness of breath and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID- 19, you should stay home away from others for 7 days or 72 hours after your fever is gone and your symptoms are improving, whichever is longer.