

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Parents of Young Children

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to prepare for and help prevent the spread of the novel (new) coronavirus in Los Angeles County. Globally, there continues to be a growing number of people infected with this virus which causes “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated COVID-19) in mainland China and elsewhere. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, current global trends indicate that the virus may spread worldwide causing a pandemic. We need to prepare to prevent the spread of this infection locally.

### Understand how coronaviruses are spread

COVID-19 is likely to spread in the same way as other respiratory illnesses like influenza. It is thought to spread from an infected person who has symptoms to others by:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

### Teach your family the importance of taking steps to prevent infection

There is no vaccine or cure for COVID-19 at this time. Antibiotics only treat infections caused by bacteria so don't work against the virus that causes COVID-19. The best thing you can do to protect yourself, is to take steps to avoid infection:

- Wash your hands often and do it thoroughly. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol for at least 20 seconds.
- Minimize close contact with others when possible.
- Limit close contact with people who are sick. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from someone who is sick – for example, if you see someone coughing, move away.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Do not share objects such as utensils, cups, food, and drink.
- Get a flu shot to protect against influenza.

### Know the symptoms of COVID-19

Most people will have a mild or moderate illness and will get better without complications. Symptoms in children tend to be milder, but our understanding of this illness is continuing to evolve. We do know that some individuals, mainly adults, will become severely ill and need to go to the hospital

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough

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- Difficulty breathing

### Take extra care if you are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19

Some people are more likely to become seriously ill if they get COVID-19. This includes the elderly, people with HIV or cancer who may have weakened immune systems, and those with heart or lung disease. It is very important that these people take extra care to avoid close contact with other people who are sick and contact their healthcare provider immediately if they do become sick.

### Know what to do if you become ill:

- Stay at home or go home as soon as possible if you begin to feel unwell, even if you have mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose. Stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or symptoms of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Wash your hands well and often.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue, and then dispose of the tissue and clean your hands immediately. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Do not care for others if possible while you are sick.
- If you have pets, avoid contact including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food while you are sick.
- If you must care for people or pets while you are sick, wash your hands before and after.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Do not share objects such as utensils, cups, food, and drink as well as personal hygiene items like toothbrushes and towels.
- Get plenty of fluids.
- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications can reduce fever and help you feel better. Remember to follow the instructions on the package instructions. Note that these medicines do not stop you from spreading germs.
  - Children should not be given medication that contains aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) because it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. Medicines without aspirin include acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®).
  - Children younger than age 2 should not be given any over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.
- Seek medical care, if needed.

Watch for signs of serious symptoms such as worsening fever, rapid breathing, shortness of breath or dehydration (unable to keep fluids down).

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### **KEEP EMERGENCY ROOMS AND HOSPITALS FREE TO TREAT SERIOUS ILLNESSES!**

- People with mild illnesses should not go to ERs or hospitals for treatment.
- Most people with flu-like illness will get better without the need to see a doctor or take special medicines.

### **Cleaning**

Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, bannisters, countertops, toys, remote controls, faucet handles, and phones. Use the usual cleaning agents and follow the label directions.

### **Consider the impact of COVID-19 on school, work, and other activities**

#### *School and childcare:*

- Make sure that you are signed up to receive notices (such as robo-calls, and emails) from your school or childcare.
- Consider how you will manage childcare if there are closures, early dismissals, or other changes to school activities.
- Ask your school how your child can continue to learn if they aren't in school.

#### *Work:*

- Find out about leave policies at work, including if you need to have a doctor's note.
- Ask about options to work from home if you have a job that might be suitable for teleworking.

#### *Caring for others:*

- Make a plan for taking care of family members who are elderly, disabled or sick if they, or their caregivers become ill.

#### *Other Situations:*

- For tasks or situations that cannot be avoided, stop, think through how you can protect yourself and others as much as possible. Strategies include the use of protective gear, keeping as much of a distance from people as you can, and reducing the amount of time that you need to be in a situation.

### **Preparing at home**

- Make sure that you know the phone number of 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.
- Update your emergency kits with non-perishable food, water and essential supplies in case you need to stay home.
- Have adequate supplies of prescription medications as well as over the counter medicines to help with cold and flu symptoms.

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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- 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.

### Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. 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/>
  - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline (800) 854-7771

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>

If you have questions and would like to speak to someone, or need help finding medical care, call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1 which is available 24/7.

**911 is not for health information!**  
Keep emergency lines open.