

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

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

### Recent Updates

12/30/20: Added resources for coping with stress and getting help.

11/30/20: Gatherings with individuals outside of your household are prohibited.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health warns that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is widespread throughout the county and asks everyone to do their part to protect themselves and our community. We encourage you to be informed and prepared with a household plan to help protect your health and control spread of COVID-19. Here are the basics you need to know and do.

### Know the facts about COVID-19 spread

It is spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing, and talking
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person

Fully 1/3 of people who get COVID-19 do not show any symptoms but can still spread the virus. That means you have to treat everyone you meet as if they could be infected and pass the virus on to you. It also means you might be infected and not know it. COVID-19 may also spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### Recognize symptoms of COVID-19

People who have COVID-19 and do have symptoms have reported a range of illness from mild symptoms to severe illness which may require admission to the hospital or even lead to death. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Chills
- Congestion or runny nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

### Stay safe: Avoid gatherings

As of December 18, 2020, private and public gatherings with individuals not in your household are prohibited (with the exception of faith-based services or protests). Private gatherings with people from different households increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. As a result, gathering together with people not in your household is temporarily not allowed. You can find out what is and is not allowed at any given time by going to: [Open in LAC Examples](#).

### Practice Physical Distancing

To stop COVID-19 in our community everyone must practice physical distancing (also known as social distancing). This means keeping at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible. Guidelines for physical distancing are:

- Try to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from people outside your household at all times.

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- Stay home as much as possible! Leave your house only for essential activities such as going to the doctor or to the grocery store. If you are an essential worker and cannot work from home, go to your workplace but practice physical distancing while you are there.
- Talk to your employer about options for working from home.
- Avoid any places where a lot of people are together (public transportation, stores, crowded streets).
- If you need care, call your doctor or dentist to find out if they offer telemedicine or phone advice. If, however, you or family members are due for routine immunizations, contact your provider to schedule them. If you need emergency care, call 911.
- Cancel all non-essential travel, including travel for vacation, tourism, or recreation.
- Avoid public transport if you can.
- Avoid any physical contact with people other than members of your household. Come up with ways to greet individuals outside your household that do not require you to be closer than 6 feet.

### Avoid spread

- Wear a cloth face covering at all times when you are out and around other people. Make sure it covers your nose and your mouth - see Public Health's [Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information.
  - Infants should not wear face coverings but children between the ages of 2 and 8 should use them under adult supervision.
  - Anyone who has been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face covering should instead wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form-fitting under the chin is preferred.
  - Masks with one-way valves should not be used.
- 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.
- 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](http://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.

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- For more information see the Public Health Guide [Preventing the Spread of Respiratory Illness in the Home](#).

### Getting food and other necessities

- Have one member of the household go to the store. Go when it is least busy and stock up on essential supplies so that you don't have to go out as often. While you are in the store, keep at least 6 feet away from people as much as you can.
- Use food delivery services, drive-thru, or carry out for both restaurants and many grocery stores. Make sure everyone involved is wearing a face covering and practices physical distancing.
- 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 high risk of getting seriously sick from COVID-19 due to age or a medical condition, ask for food, medical supplies, and other essential items to be brought to your door by family, neighbors, or delivery services. Call 2-1-1 or visit the Public Health [resource webpage](#) ([ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm](http://ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm)) if you need assistance getting food and other essential items.
- If your family includes children attending schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) your child may be eligible for free meals. LAUSD, 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.

### If you have to use public transport, or shop, go to work, or participate in other activities in public spaces, 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.
- Choose outdoor over indoor activities. Participating in indoor activities increases your risk of exposure to COVID-19, especially in spaces with poor ventilation.
- Try to go to places like the grocery store 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.

### If you have children

- If your children must be with you in a public setting, keep them near you and remind them to stay at least 6 feet from other people, including other children. Take care that children don't share objects, such

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as toys or game pieces. Bring along toys or activities that will keep your children entertained without requiring close contact with anyone else when they are out with you.

- 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](#).
- 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.
- 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. Try indoor activity breaks to stretch or move throughout the day to help your children stay healthy and focused and take advantage of outdoor recreational activities that are open. LA County Parks and Recreation offers [free distance learning](#) physical education classes for students of all ages.
- School at home:
  - 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 wake-up times, 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 or use curbside pick-up services where available. There are digital books, audiobooks and hosted online events.
  - Talk to your children about expectations and how they are adjusting to being at home versus at school.

### Tips for coping with isolation during the pandemic

- Exercise at home or outdoors. There are multiple free or low-cost online resources offering a wide variety of exercise programs.
  - Explore LA County’s Parks and Recreation Department’s [free online recreational programming](#) from home, including exercise, nature, arts and culture and technology classes.
  - [The Wellness Center](#) on the campus of LAC+USC Medical Center, also provides free exercise classes and other services accessible via a phone, tablet, or computer using Zoom. Register [here](#). Call 213-784-9191, for more information.
  - Older adults may want to participate in online [free classes and social clubs](#) provided by the Los Angeles Department of Aging. Options include yoga, Qi Gong, meditation, and dance classes.
- 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.



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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. LA County residents have free access to [Headspace Plus](#). This is a collection of mindfulness and meditation resources in English and Spanish. It also has movement and sleep exercises to help manage stress, fear, and anxiety related to COVID-19.
- **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,** the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)’s [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the 211LA webpage ([211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health](http://211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health)) provide local resources to address mental health & wellbeing needs and concerns.
- **If you want to speak with someone about your mental health,** contact your doctor or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-854-7771. You can also text “LA” to 74174.

### Know what to do if you become ill

Look out for the symptoms of COVID-19, listed on Page 1. If you develop symptoms, call your doctor and follow the instructions in the Public Health [Home Care Instructions for People with Respiratory Symptoms](#), which can be accessed at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare).

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

- **Make sure that you have phone numbers** for your doctor’s office, local urgent care, and emergency room 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.
- **Identify another household member** if possible, to be in charge of preparing meals and cleaning up.
- **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.

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- **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, to learn about resources in any of these areas. .
- **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/resources/service/hate-crimes-reporting-22>.

### Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news, and hoaxes surrounding COVID-19. Visit Public Health's COVID-19 scams webpage ([ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams](http://ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams)) for information and resources on how to [avoid COVID-19 health care scams](#).

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

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>