

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

## Recent Updates:

11/21/20: Updated definition of a contact, transmission, what to do if symptoms, and resources for coping with stress.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County.

## 1. How is COVID-19 spread?

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

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing, and talking
- Close personal contact

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. Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

## 2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to people becoming severely ill and needing hospitalization or dying. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include some combination of the following: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell. This list of symptoms is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider about any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

## 3. What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?

- Wear a cloth face covering when you are close to others UNLESS you cannot remove it by yourself, have difficulty breathing, or have been told not to wear one by your medical provider
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash can, and immediately wash hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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## 4. Can I get tested for COVID-19?

If you are having symptoms of COVID-19 be sure to speak to the facility staff and call your doctor about getting tested. You can also visit [covid19.lacounty.gov/testing](https://covid19.lacounty.gov/testing) or call 2-1-1 to schedule a same day or next day appointment for free testing.

You may be offered testing regardless of whether you have symptoms especially if a positive case is identified within your facility. Be sure to speak with staff about their testing policy.

## 5. What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 symptoms?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 notify the facility staff right away they will most likely connect you with your healthcare provider and ask that you get a test for COVID-19.

If you test positive for COVID-19, or your healthcare provider tells you that you are likely to have COVID-19, your facility will help to ensure that you are isolated from others. Self-isolation means staying apart from others for at least 10 days from when your symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours with no fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND when your symptoms have improved (for example, cough or shortness of breath).

Older adults, and those with compromised immune systems or underlying medical problems who experience COVID-19 symptoms should speak with the facility and contact their doctor early. 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 or any other serious symptoms, call 911 or notify your facility right away so you can access emergency care.

The facility will also work with you to identify any close contacts that would need to be placed in quarantine. Close contacts include all individuals who were within 6 feet of you for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting 2 days 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.

## 6. What should I do if I have a positive test for COVID-19 but no symptoms?

If you have a positive test for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms, your facility will still require that you self-isolate for at least 10 days from the date that your test was taken. If you develop symptoms the facility will have you follow the same instruction noted above.

## 7. What about visits from my friends and family?

Visits from family and friends are important to your well-being. However, because visitors can introduce COVID-19 into the facility, the facility will most likely not allow visitors in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

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Ask to set up alternative methods of visitation, such as through telephone or videoconferencing.

## 8. What about group activities at my facility?

Public Health has asked facilities to minimize group living activities and outside programming, such as community eating or gatherings. Please contact your facility manager for more information.

## 9. What if I am stressed about COVID-19?

When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, it is normal to feel anxious and show signs of stress. It is important to care for your own physical and mental health. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the [211LA webpage](#) provide local resources to address mental health & wellbeing needs and concerns. Guidance and resources are also available on the CDC webpage, [Coping with Stress](#).

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 or call 2-1-1.

## 10. What is my facility doing to protect me?

Talk to your facility manager about the different ways that they are working to keep you safe, and healthy.

## 11. Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. 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. The website has more information on COVID-19 including a guide to coping with stress.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
  - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
  - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.
- Call 2-1-1