

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Recent Updates:

11/21/20: Added information about what to do if you have symptoms, prevention, transmission, 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. Please check with the facility before visiting and follow issued guidelines in order to keep everyone healthy. If you are feeling sick, stay at home or go home as soon as possible even if you have mild symptoms. In order to protect elderly residents at congregate facilities, you may be asked to curtail all visits. Please plan now on how to maintain communication with a resident through alternative virtual communications.

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 and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person

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, some needing hospitalization, or dying. People over the age of 65, and those with underlying medical conditions, are at especially high risk. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include some of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting. This list of symptoms is not all inclusive.

3. What should I do if I have these symptoms?

Stay at home or go home as soon as possible if you begin to feel unwell, even if you have mild symptoms. Contact your regular health care provider for guidance, arrange a test for COVID-19, and discuss whether you need to isolate. You can also visit covid19.lacounty.gov/testing or call 2-1-1 to schedule a same day or next day appointment for free testing. For more information, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare.

4. Will I be allowed to visit my loved one at the facility?

Most facilities have stopped all visitors. Some facilities may have exceptions under special circumstances, such as end of life visits. Even if they do allow visitors you should stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19. It is best to check with the facility before you go to determine what their policy is. Ask them

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

about any alternative visitation options that you can take advantage of like video calls or other electronic communications that they have made available to their residents. It is important to continue to check in on your loved one in other ways even if you cannot visit in person.

5. What is the facility doing to protect everyone?

Some of the ways many facilities are trying to protect staff and residents is by limiting visitors, eliminating group activities and non-essential services like barbers or in-person entertainment. Medical services may be transitioned to telehealth visits if possible. Residents may be asked to minimize leaving their rooms except for essential activities like doctor's visits. Talk to the facility manager about ways that they are working to keep everyone safe and healthy.

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

- 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.
- 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.
- Avoid or clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often using a regular household cleaning product.
- Increase ventilation - go outside or open windows if it is safe to do so.
- Wear a cloth face covering whenever you are outside of your home and around others who are not part of your household.

7. 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 (LACDMH)'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.

8. Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news, and hoaxes surrounding the novel coronavirus. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by Public Health through

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

press releases, social media, and our website:

- 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

