

Managing COVID-19 at Home



If you have or suspect COVID-19:

- **Stay home!** Keep CALM and POSITIVE. Remember, most patients recover.
- **Keep in touch with your doctor** (ideally your primary care physician): It is important to communicate regularly about your symptoms and treatment, so the doctor can advise, monitor and arrange for treatment as and when needed.
- **Consult:** Ask your doctor what supplements (vitamins and nutrients) you may need, e.g. Vitamin D (no more than 400-600 IU, zinc (no more than 75mg) daily, others as recommended. Ask *when* to wear masks at home, and *what* type of mask is best for you.
- **Keep hydrated:** Drink plenty of water and non-alcoholic, non-carbonated, fluids like herbal tea and juices. Warm fluids are soothing and help loosen some of the mucus from the lungs.
- Read, meditate, listen to music and relax.
- **Eat healthy:** Eat more fruits and vegetables; avoid pastries, sugar and other refined carbohydrates.
- **Keep moving:** Do light exercises such as walking, dancing or stretching. Don't overdo it, but avoid being sedentary.
- **Assess:** Monitor your health and record readings using a thermometer and pulse oximeter:
 - Oral thermometer: $\geq 37.6^{\circ}\text{C}$ (fever)
 - Ear thermometer: $\geq 38.1^{\circ}\text{C}$ (fever)
 - Normal Oxygen saturation: $\geq 94\%$ on warm hands. If below that level, seek medical help

Managing mild COVID-19 symptoms:

- **Symptomatic treatment as needed.**
 - Fever, headaches, and muscle pain: Acetaminophen is preferred over aspirin fever-reducing medication.
 - Cough: Try aspirin-free cough syrup, or honey-based cough suppressant.
 - Sore throat: Sucking on ice cubes or warm salt water gargles may provide some relief. Try menthol-based drops, if needed.
 - Congestion: Steam inhalation will help loosen and drain mucus <https://www.healthline.com/health/steam-inhalation#how-to>
- **Protect others.**
 - Isolate yourself: Keep to your room, avoid visiting shared areas. Avoid touching shared items and sanitize shared surfaces or items you touch.
 - Practice respiratory etiquette: Use a tissue or the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing. Discard used tissues.
 - Clean your hands often: Use lukewarm water and soap for 20 seconds. Where there's no water, use hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid public transportation.
- **Try to stop smoking or vaping!**
- **Breathing exercises:** Take a *deep breath*, hold it for 5 seconds, and cough. This will help in lung expansion.
- **Lay facing down:** Aim for 15 minutes, 6 times per day to help clear mucus and improve breathing.

Be prepared to go to a hospital if needed:

Monitor these **emergency symptoms**:

- **breathing difficulties**
- **persistent chest pain**
- **sudden state of confusion**
- **inability to stay awake**
- **skin, lips, and/or nail beds that turn bluish or pale**
- **Seek help if persistent high temperature or low oxygen saturation.**

Be especially careful if you have an underlying or are at risk of: heart disease; lung disease; obesity; diabetes mellitus, or sickle cell disease

Caregivers, note:

- **Emergency:** Monitor any serious symptoms and contact a physician or emergency services as needed.
- **Chest physiotherapy:** If the patient is congested, firmly tap repeatedly the back for 3 minutes to help clear mucus.

Recommendations for caregivers:

- **Caution!** Caregiving carries risks. If you are at high risk of severe illness with COVID-19 (i.e. asthmatic, COPD, heart disease), find someone who is at less risk to be a caregiver.
- **Take care:** Monitor your own symptoms, get rest, and eat well. If you are sick, you can't help anyone.
- **Ventilate:** Keep the area with open windows and fans on.
- **Avoid sharing spaces with the sick:** Always keep a safe distance of 6 feet!
- **Wash your hands often.**
- **Wear masks:** Make sure it fits and covers *both* your mouth and nose. Avoid touching the mask. Discard if the mask gets wet or soiled.
- **Wear gloves:** Discard after every use.
- **Do not share items with the sick.**
- **Sanitize:** Keep the home clean and disinfected. Avoid cleaning the sick person's room unless really necessary.
- **Laundry:** Avoid shaking dirty clothes and use gloves to handle them. Wash all clothes in warm water, if possible.
- **Do not allow visitors:** Avoid visitors when somebody is sick at home *for your safety and theirs!*
- **Quarantine:** You must quarantine for 14 days after contact with patient to ensure you don't infect others.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

<http://ccrhp.rcm.upr.edu/?q=COVID-19>

<https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/what-to-know/treat-covid-at-home>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/treating-covid-19-at-home/art-20483273>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-what-if-i-feel-sick>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/pulse-oximetry#purpose-and-uses>

Breathing exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQwheE7wJZY>