

# Caring for someone at home

Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild illness and should recover at home.\* Care at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help protect people who are at risk for getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

*COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.*

If you are caring for someone at home, [monitor for emergency signs](#), [prevent the spread of germs](#), [treat symptoms](#), and carefully consider [when to end home isolation](#).

**\*Note:** Older adults and people of any age with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes are [at higher risk](#) for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should seek care as soon as symptoms start.

## Monitor the person for worsening symptoms. Know the emergency warning signs.

- Have their healthcare provider's contact information on hand.
- If they are getting sicker, call their healthcare provider. For medical emergencies, call 911 and notify the dispatch personnel that they have or are suspected to have COVID-19.

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include\*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

## Prevent the spread of germs when caring for someone who is sick

- Have the person stay in one room, away from other people, including yourself, as much as possible.
  - If possible, have them use a separate bathroom.
  - Avoid sharing personal household items, like dishes, towels, and bedding
  - If facemasks are available, have them wear a facemask when they are around people, including you.
  - If the sick person can't wear a facemask, you should wear one while in the same room with them, if facemasks are available.
  - If the sick person needs to be around others (within the home, in a vehicle, or doctor's office), they should wear a facemask.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after interacting with the sick person. If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Every day, clean all surfaces that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs
  - Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
  - If laundry is soiled, wear disposable gloves and keep the soiled items away from your body while laundering. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
- Avoid having any unnecessary visitors.
- For any additional questions about their care, contact their healthcare provider or state or local health department.

## Provide symptom treatment

- Make sure the sick person drinks a lot of fluids to stay hydrated and rests at home.
- Over-the-counter medicines may help with symptoms.
- For *most people*, symptoms last a few days and get better after a week.

## When to end home isolation (staying home)

- People **with COVID-19 who have stayed home (are home isolated)** can stop home isolation under the following conditions:
  - ***If they will not have a test*** to determine if they are still contagious, they can leave home after these three things have happened:
    - They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers)  
AND
    - other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved)  
AND
    - at least 7 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared
  - ***If they will be tested*** to determine if they are still contagious, they can leave home after these three things have happened:
    - They no longer have a fever (without the use medicine that reduces fevers)  
AND
    - other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved)  
AND
    - They received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart. Their doctor will follow [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html).