

Guidance for Seniors and People with Chronic Medical Conditions

COVID-19 coronavirus infection has been much more serious for older adults and for people with chronic medical conditions. If you or a family member, neighbor, or friend is in one of these categories, here are some guidelines for helping to prevent infection.

The following measures can help to lower your risk of getting sick from COVID-19 coronavirus:

- **Prepare**
 - Use delivery services or mail order for medications and groceries or ask a neighbor or friend to pick things up for you.
 - Keep foods that won't spoil in the house so you don't need to run errands.
 - Keep over-the-counter medicines, like cough syrup and Tylenol (acetaminophen), and supplies, including tissues, on hand.

- **Practice social distancing**
 - Stay home if at all possible.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick and with groups of people. The fewer people you are exposed to, the lower your risk.
 - If you do need to interact with people, keep at least 6 feet apart, avoid handshakes, hugs, and otherwise touching each other, and wash hands afterwards.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or having been in a public area.
 - Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if you cannot wash your hands.
 - Avoid touching public surfaces such as doorknobs and handrails.
 - Avoid touching your nose, eyes, mouth, face.
 - Wipe down doorknobs, light switches, toilets, faucets, cell phones, and sinks in your home every day and any time they appear dirty. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions.
 - Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated areas.
 - Avoid all non-essential travel.

- **Make a plan for if you get sick:**
 - Talk with your healthcare provider to get more information about watching your health for symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Stay in touch with others by phone, email, or social media.
 - Determine who can care for you if your caregiver gets sick.
 - Make sure your caregiver and family know what medications you are taking.

- **Watch for symptoms and warning signs:**
 - COVID-19 symptoms include a fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel you are developing symptoms, call your doctor to see if you need to be seen or tested for COVID-19.
 - Call your doctor or call 911 if your symptoms are severe such as:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
 - Pain or pressure in the chest.
 - New confusion or unusual sleepiness.
 - Bluish lips or face.
 - If you are only mildly sick, you may recover at home.
 - Stay away from others while you recover.
 - Use a separate bathroom, if available.
 - Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, mugs, utensils, towels, or bedding with people and animals in your home.
 - Thoroughly wash these items after you use them with soap and water.
 - Wash laundry using your normal laundry detergent and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.
 - Get medical attention immediately if your symptoms are getting worse or if you have trouble breathing, chest pain, lightheadedness, or other severe symptoms.