



# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

// UPDATE AS OF MARCH 17, 2020



SMARTECH  
NEXUS

## // What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new strain of a virus that can affect your lungs and airways, formally called coronavirus.

Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can be a dry cough, a high temperature and shortness of breath. Simple measures like washing your hands often with soap and water can help stop viruses like coronavirus from (COVID-19) spreading.

There's no specific treatment for coronavirus (COVID-19). The goal of treatment is to relieve the symptoms until you recover. It's not known exactly how coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads from person to person, but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

## // How many could be infected in the U.S.?

A recent CDC projection estimated that the U.S. coronavirus epidemic could infect between 160 million and 214 million people over a period of more than a year – and kill anywhere from 200,000 to 1.7 million in the country. The lower number assumes the coronavirus is as deadly as the flu, while the higher number is based on a mortality rate of one percent of the population infected. As of today, approximately 4,661 people in the U.S. have been confirmed with the virus, though many others are undetected and asymptomatic. Of those reported, more than 85 people have died, with deaths in Washington (48), California (7), Florida (5), New York (10), New Jersey (2), Louisiana (3), Colorado (1), Georgia (1), Indiana (1), Kansas (1), Kentucky (1), Nevada (1), Oregon (1), South Carolina (1), South Dakota (1), and Virginia (1). See Attachments 1 and 2.

## // Who is at risk?

The virus is reshaping American life in communities across the country. Many state and local governments have banned large gatherings and reinforced social distancing. Early information from China and other countries, indicates that people are at higher risk of getting sick if they are:

- Aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e., anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
  - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
  - chronic kidney disease
  - chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neuron disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant
- Compromised immune system

## // Who is at risk? (con't)

**Please note:** there are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If you are in this category, you should take stringent measures in order to keep yourself and others safe. For now, you should rigorously follow the social distancing advice in full, outlined below. People in these groups are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:

- people who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukemia who are at any stage of treatment
- people with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- people with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

## // What is social distancing?

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

They are:

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information
- Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services
- Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as possible.
- For those who are over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant, we strongly advise you to follow the above measures as much as you can, and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible.
- This advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.
- Handwashing and respiratory hygiene
- There are general principles you can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including: washing your hands more often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer when you get home or into work, when you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, eat or handle food
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who have symptoms
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and wash your hands
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home

## // What should you do if you develop symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The same guidance applies to the general population and those at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19). If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature and/or new and continuous cough), self-isolate at home for 7 days.

## // How can I get assistance with foods and medicines if I am reducing my social contacts?

Ask family, friends and neighbors to support you and use online services. If this is not possible, then the public sector, business, charities, and the general public are gearing up to help those advised to stay at home. It is important to speak to others and ask them to help you to make arrangements for the delivery of food, medicines and essential services and supplies, and look after your physical and mental health and wellbeing.

If you receive support from health and social care organizations, for example if you have care provided for you through the local authority or health care system, this will continue as normal. Your health or social care provider will be asked to take additional precautions to make sure that you are protected.

## // What should you do if you have hospital and medical appointments during this period?

We advise everyone to access medical assistance remotely, wherever possible. However, if you have a scheduled hospital or other medical appointment during this period, talk to your general practitioner or clinician to ensure you continue to receive the care you need and consider whether appointments can be postponed.

## // What is the advice for visitors including those who are providing care for you?

You should contact your regular social visitors, such as friends and family to let them know that you are reducing social contacts and that they should not visit you during this time unless they are providing essential care for you. Essential care includes things like help with washing, dressing, or preparing meals.

If you receive regular health or social care from an organization, either through your local authority or paid for by yourself, inform your care providers that you are reducing social contacts and agree on a plan for continuing your care.

If you receive essential care from friends or family members, speak to your caretakers about extra precautions they can take to keep you safe. You may find this guidance on home care provision useful.

It is also a good idea to speak to your caretakers about what happens if one of them becomes unwell. If you need help with care but you're not sure who to contact, or if you do not have family or friends who can help you, you can contact your local council who should be able to help you.

## // What is the advice if I live with a vulnerable person?

If you live in a house with a vulnerable person, please do the following:

- If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period. (See ending isolation section below for more information)
- If you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period
- If you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible
- If you have coronavirus symptoms:
  - Do not go to a General Practitioner, Surgeon, pharmacy, or hospital
  - You do not need to contact 911 to tell them you're staying at home
  - Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home
  - Plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure that you can successfully stay at home and consider what can be done for vulnerable people in the household
  - Ask your employer, friends, and family to help you to get the things you need to stay at home
  - Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitizer
  - if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then call 911.

## // How do you look after your mental wellbeing?

Understandably, you may find that social distancing can be boring or frustrating. You may find your mood and feelings are affected and you may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping and you might miss being outside with other people. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behavior which in turn can make you feel worse. There are simple things you can do that may help, to stay mentally and physically active during this time such as:

- Look for ideas of exercises you can do at home For example these exercises are easy and gentle, and can be done indoors.
  - **Sitting exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/>
  - **Strength exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-exercises/>
  - **Flexibility exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/flexibility-exercises/>
  - **Balance exercises:** <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/balance-exercises/>
- Spend time doing things you enjoy – this might include reading, cooking, other indoor hobbies or listening to the radio or watching TV programs
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs
- Keep your windows open to let in fresh air, get some natural sunlight if you can, or get outside into the garden
- You can also go for a walk outdoors if you stay more than 10 feet from others.

## // What steps can you take to stay connected with family and friends during this time?

Draw on support you might have through your friends, family and other networks during this time. Try to stay in touch with those around you over the phone, by post, or online. Let people know how you would like to stay in touch and build that into your routine. This is also important in looking after your mental wellbeing and you may find it helpful to talk to them about how you are feeling. Remember it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust and in doing so you may end up providing support to them too.

## // What is our advice for informal caretakers?

If you are caring for someone who is vulnerable, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk at the current time. Ensure you follow advice on good hygiene such as:

- wash your hands upon arrival and often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- do not visit if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care
- provide information on who they should call if they feel unwell, how to use NHS 111 online coronavirus service and leave the number for NHS 111 prominently displayed
- find out about different sources of support that could be used and access further advice on creating a contingency plan available from faith-based organizations and non-profits in your community.
- look after your own well-being and physical health during this time. Further information on this is available [here](#)

## // Additional Resources

### Confirmed cases of coronavirus map

<https://binged.it/2x8doMA>

### Coronavirus: An Extra Dose of Prevention Tip Sheet

[https://linkscommunity.org/assets/PDFs/RTSL\\_Corona\\_FS\\_v4\\_providers.pdf](https://linkscommunity.org/assets/PDFs/RTSL_Corona_FS_v4_providers.pdf)

### Guidance on social distancing for everyone and protecting older people and vulnerable adults

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

