

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of the novel (new) coronavirus in Los Angeles County. The following recommendations are for In Home Supportive Service (IHSS) personnel assisting with activities of daily living such as:

- House Cleaning
- Meal preparation / Feeding
- Laundry
- Personal care services (i.e., toileting, oral care, bathing, and grooming)

What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can change and infect humans, then can spread from person-to-person, which happened with this coronavirus.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is likely to spread in the same way as other respiratory illnesses like the flu. It is thought to spread from an infected person who has symptoms to others by:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

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, those with underlying medical conditions, and pregnant women are at especially high risk. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

Is there a vaccine or treatment?

Currently, there is no vaccine available and no specific antiviral treatment recommended. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. This is a rapidly evolving situation, and the CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. The CDC works 24-7 to protect people's health.

Can I get tested for COVID-19?

If you are sick, your health care provider may decide to do a test for coronavirus. Only health care providers can test or order a test for COVID-19. Since most people will get better with rest and time, there is no need to see a doctor if you have mild symptoms. If you are sick and think you should be tested for COVID-19, call your doctor before going in for care.

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

Hand washing:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, before and after any caregiving activities, and especially after you remove gloves or other protective clothing.
- 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.

Wear appropriate barriers during caregiving activities:

Gloves:

Wear disposable gloves for all caregiving activities and general cleaning activities, especially when you might have contact with:

- Blood
- Body fluids
- Secretions (such as saliva during oral care)
- Excretions (such as feces or urine during toileting care)
- Non-intact skin
- Surfaces or linens soiled with blood or other infectious materials

Facemasks:

Wear a disposable facemask during caregiving activities, if the client has respiratory illness. Be sure to place a mask on the client as well during these activities.

Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after use. Do not reuse.

- When removing gloves and mask, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately wash your hands again with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Aprons/Gowns:

Consider using a plastic reusable or washable gown or apron and disinfect between uses

- For caregiving activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated.
- For high-contact care activities, including bathing that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of the caregiver.

Bathing/Toileting:

- When feasible, consider giving bed baths to patients with respiratory illness symptoms to avoid splashes and getting masks wet.
- Close the lid of the toilet or commode prior to flushing to avoid spraying or splashing.

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Laundering:

- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

Feeding:

- Wash hands prior to meal preparation and wear appropriate barriers including gloves & mask if the patient is ill during feeding. Wear gloves while washing utensils and wash hands after removing gloves.

House cleaning:

- Clean & disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#). This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 symptoms?

Immediately contact your facility or regular health care provider for guidance and evaluation.

- Stay home if you are sick. Try to get someone else to care for the patient
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas
- Stay home until at least 7 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after you have recovered. Recovery means that your fever is gone for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications AND your respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
- If you live with the patient and there are no other caregivers, minimize time spent in the patient's room and use a separate bathroom if possible.
- Wear a mask during caregiving activities and place a mask on the patient as well.
- Avoid sharing personal household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with others in the home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables regularly.
- Tell all of your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Close contacts include all household members, any intimate contact, and all individuals who were within 6 feet of you for more than 10 minutes, starting 48 hours before your symptoms began until your isolation period ends. In addition, anyone who had contact with your body fluids and/or secretions (such as were coughed on/sneezed on, shared utensils or saliva or provided care to you without wearing protective equipment) needs to be in quarantine.

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What if I may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but don't have symptoms?

- If you are a close contact of someone with lab confirmed or suspected COVID-19 (you were within 6 feet of them for more than 10 minutes starting 48 hours before their symptoms began till their isolation period ends or had contact with their body fluids and/or secretions (such as were coughed on/sneezed on, shared utensils or saliva or provided care to them without wearing protective equipment), you will need to quarantine yourself for 14 days (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/COVHomeQuarantine.pdf>) and call your healthcare provider if you develop symptoms.
- If you are not a close contact of someone with lab confirmed or suspected COVID-19, there is no need to do anything other than practice everyday prevention, and monitor yourself for symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever and cough.
- If you have been in contact with someone who was a contact of someone else with COVID-19, but who did not have symptoms (i.e. contact of a contact), you are not considered to be exposed to COVID-19. There is no need to do anything other than practice everyday prevention.

What if I am stressed about COVID-19?

When you hear, read, or watch the 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. For help, call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771 or call 2-1-1.

Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by the LA County Department of Public Health. The website has additional information on COVID-19, including a guide to coping with stress.

- 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