

What to know if you have COVID-19



If you've recently found out you have COVID-19, you probably have lots of questions. COVID-19 can cause serious health problems,¹ so it's important to learn about the disease and your risk for serious symptoms.

Talk to your doctor about your risk and your treatment options so you can decide what's right for you.

Having COVID-19 may seem scary, and staying away from other people — including your friends and family — can be hard. It's okay to feel scared, stressed, sad, angry, or lonely. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people all over the world are having the same kinds of feelings and experiences as you.

The good news is that scientists are working hard to develop treatments² and vaccines³ for COVID-19 to help people get better — and to end the pandemic sooner.

¹U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/need-to-know.html>

²U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/treatments-for-severe-illness.html>

³U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. This is a type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can cause:⁴

- Fever or chills
- Cough, sore throat, or trouble breathing
- Body aches or headache
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Upset stomach (nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea)
- Feeling very tired
- Loss of taste or smell

Some people with COVID-19 have many symptoms, and some have just a few. Other people don't have any symptoms at all — and may not even know they're sick.

Most people with COVID-19 get better within 2 weeks. But some people are very sick for a long time and have to stay in the hospital. They may need a ventilator to help them breathe — and some people even die.⁵

Call your doctor to ask about your treatment options — including over-the-counter medicines that can help you feel better, like a pain reliever or cough medicine. It's also important to call your doctor if your symptoms get worse — they may ask you to make an appointment or go to the emergency room.⁶

Call 911 or go to the emergency room right away if you're having:⁷

- Trouble breathing — or if your lips or face look blue
- Severe chest pain
- Sudden confusion
- Trouble staying awake



⁴U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

⁵U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

⁶U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

⁷U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html#seek-medical-attention>

Who is more likely to get very sick from COVID-19?

There's no way to know for sure who will get very sick from COVID-19, but the older you are, the higher your risk for serious symptoms. People age 65 and older are especially at risk.⁸

People who smoke, people who are pregnant, and people who have these diseases and conditions may also be at higher risk for serious symptoms:⁹

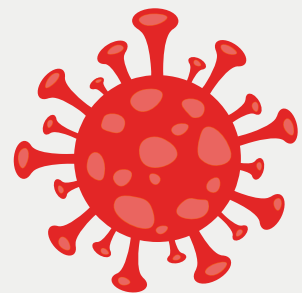
- Serious heart problems
- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes or chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), a type of lung disease
- Weakened immune system
- Cancer
- Sickle cell disease

People in racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely to have serious symptoms, too. Experts think this may be because of things like discrimination and problems getting health care.¹⁰

Can COVID-19 cause long-term problems?

Many people recover completely from COVID-19. For others, COVID-19 may damage their heart, lungs, or other parts of the body. This could cause problems in the future, long after they recover.

Since COVID-19 is a new disease, scientists don't yet know what other health problems it may cause in the future for someone who has the disease today.¹¹



⁸U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

⁹U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

¹⁰U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html>

¹¹U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects.html>

What COVID-19 treatments are available?

Scientists and doctors are working hard to find treatments for COVID-19. Right now, there are a few treatment options for people who are in the hospital because of serious COVID-19 symptoms.¹²

There's also a type of COVID-19 treatment — called **neutralizing antibody drugs** — for newly diagnosed people with mild to moderate symptoms who are at high risk of getting very sick. These drugs may help limit the amount of virus in the body, which may help people's symptoms improve sooner and make it less likely that they'll need to go to the hospital.¹³

Talk with your doctor about your treatment options. Ask about the risks, benefits, and side effects of each option. Together, you and your doctor can decide what's right for you.

What about medicines to treat specific symptoms?

Your doctor may recommend over-the-counter medicines — like pain relievers to help with fever and body aches, or cough medicine so coughing doesn't keep you awake at night. These medicines can help you feel better, but they won't help your body fight the virus or make you less likely to get very sick.¹⁴



¹² National Institutes of Health: <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/>

¹³ U.S. Food and Drug Administration: <http://pi.lilly.com/eua/bamlanivimab-eua-fda-authorization-letter.pdf>

¹⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/treatments-for-severe-illness.html>

How do I help keep others from getting sick?

While you have COVID-19, stay home as much as possible. It's okay to leave your home to see your doctor or get treatment. If you need to go out, wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth and stay away from other people as much as you can.

This is important because COVID-19 spreads easily from person to person. It mainly spreads through the air — when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or talks and someone nearby breathes in their germs.¹⁵

What if I live with other people?

If possible, have them stay home also — and ask your doctor about getting them tested for COVID-19. It's important for you and everyone you live with to stay home until your doctor says it's okay to go out again.¹⁶

When you're at home, you can take these steps to protect the people you live with:¹⁷

- Stay in a different room from other people
- Use a separate bathroom if you can — or, if your home only has 1 bathroom, clean it often with cleaning spray or disinfecting wipes
- Wear a mask when someone else is in the room
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or with your elbow every time you cough or sneeze
- Don't share items like dishes and towels with other people

Experts are learning more about COVID-19 every day. For the latest recommendations, visit [who.int/COVID-19](https://www.who.int/COVID-19) or [cdc.gov/COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19).

Remember, if you have COVID-19, you're not alone.

Talk with your doctor if you have any questions about COVID-19 or your treatment options.



¹⁵U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

¹⁶U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

¹⁷U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>