

A Guide: How To Prepare For Coronavirus

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is telling Americans that they should be prepared for the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak in their community.

But what does preparedness look like in practice?

The short answer: **Don't panic — but do prepare.**

- **Should I stock up on food and meds?**
- **Are special cleaning supplies needed?**
- **What about face masks?**
- **What to do about work — and telecommuting?**
- **What's the plan if you get sick?**
- **Do you have a plan for kids and older relatives?**
- **Are there any habits I can practice at home to stay healthy?**

Should I stock up on food and meds?

The reason to stock up on certain products now isn't so much to avoid potential shortages in the event of an outbreak but to practice what experts call social distancing. Basically, you want to avoid crowds to minimize your risk of catching the disease. If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, the last place you want to be is in line at a crowded grocery store or drugstore.

If you take daily medications — for example, blood pressure pills — make sure you have enough to last a couple of weeks, suggests Katz, as long as you can get approval for an extended supply from your insurance provider.

Also, worth pre-buying: fever reducers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Think about adding enough nonperishable foods to your pantry to carry you through for a couple of weeks. Also, suggested having on hand your go-to sickbed foods, like chicken or vegetable broth and crackers in case of illness, as well as hydrating drinks such as Gatorade and Pedialyte for kids.

That's because if you do get sick, you want to be ready to ride it out at home if need be.

COVID 19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Illustration shows a person coughing into their elbow, with virus particles being spread towards others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.** Illustration shows a person sneezing into a tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.** Illustration shows a person's hand near their face with a red prohibition sign over it.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.** Illustration shows hands being washed with soap and water.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.** Illustration shows a house with a person in bed inside.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.** Illustration shows hands being washed under a stream of water with soap bubbles.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

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Are special cleaning supplies needed?

We still don't know exactly how long the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces. Based on what CDC knows from other coronaviruses is that most household cleansers — such as bleach wipes or alcohol — will kill them.

Even wiping down surfaces with soap and water should do the trick, CDC says, because this coronavirus has a lipid envelope around it — like a coat that keeps the RNA inside the viral particle. And soap is a detergent that can break down lipids. "We use them to take grease and oil, which is a lipid, off our dishes," Experts note.

If COVID-19 does start circulating in your community or there's someone sick at home, plan on cleaning surfaces that get touched frequently — such as kitchen counters and bathroom faucets — several times a day.

What about face masks?

The science on whether it's helpful to wear a face mask out in public is really, really mixed, as we've reported in depth. (For starters, it depends on what kind of mask you are wearing and whether you use it correctly.)

Some infectious disease experts are reluctant to recommend that people wear masks as a preventive measure because they can provide a false sense of security.

What experts do agree on is that wearing a mask is a good idea if you are sick, so you can reduce the chances that you'll infect others, whether it's family members at home or people at the doctor's office if you go in to be seen. Perl says that wearing a mask when sick is especially a good idea if you live with someone whose immune system is compromised or who's elderly, since people in their 60s and above seem to be the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Some research suggests that wearing a mask can help protect you if you're caring for a sick family member, but only if you wear it all the time in the presence of the sick person and if you are careful not to touch the front of it, which could be contaminated with pathogens.

What to do about work — and telecommuting?

Now is the time to talk to your boss about your ability to work from home if COVID-19 is spreading locally. Obviously, if you're sick, you should stay home. But even if you are well, telecommuting makes sense in the event of a local outbreak to reduce the chances that you'll be infected.

That might be the prudent thing for many people to do if they're able to do it, especially in big cities like New York, where large crowds of people are concentrated on public transport.

What's the plan if you get sick?

If you show early signs of illness — like a fever or a dry cough — you should call your doctor's office but don't necessarily head straight to the emergency room or urgent care, where you might infect others.

Do you have a plan for kids and older relatives?

You should start figuring out now what you would do if day care centers or schools start closing because of an outbreak. Do you have a backup childcare plan in place?

"Having a plan for these kinds of eventualities now — instead of like it happened in China, where one minute things were open and the next minute they weren't — can be very helpful and a lot less disruptive," Experts Say.

Are there any habits I can practice at home to stay healthy?

Everyone in the house start a new habit today: Wash your hands as soon as you walk through the door.

You've heard it over and over, but one of the best ways to protect yourself against infection from COVID-19 — or cold or flu, for that matter – is good old-fashioned hand hygiene.

Washing your hands frequently, as well as avoiding touching your face, eyes and nose, is a tried-and-true way to cut down on respiratory infections.

Studies have shown that "good hand-washing and frequent hand-washing will decrease the risk of transmission of these viruses anywhere from 30 to 50 percent," Experts say. "You can use the **alcohol-based hand gels**, or you can use soap and water. It doesn't need to be any kind of antibacterial soap." And you should scrub your hands for **at least 20 seconds** — about as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.



What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath



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What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Stay Safe – Stay Healthy

Source :

<https://Cdc.gov>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/26/809650625/a-guide-how-to-prepare-your-home-for-coronavirus>