

From CDC website and if you need additional information go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>

# Community Mitigation Guidance for COVID-19 Response in the United States: Nonpharmaceutical Interventions for Community Preparedness and Outbreak Response

## Related Pages

Nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) are public health actions that can slow the spread of emerging respiratory diseases like COVID-19 for which vaccines and drug treatments are not yet available.<sup>1</sup> They include personal protective measures implemented by individuals and community measures implemented by affected communities.<sup>1</sup> NPIs are used to build community preparedness in communities without known COVID-19 disease and to support outbreak responses in communities where local cases or cluster of diseases have occurred.

## NPIS for Community Preparedness

CDC recommends individuals and families follow everyday preventive measures:

- Voluntary Home Isolation: Stay home when you are sick with respiratory disease symptoms. At the present time, these symptoms are more likely due to influenza or other respiratory viruses than to COVID-19-related virus.
- Respiratory Etiquette: Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can.
- Hand Hygiene: Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.
- Environmental Health Action: Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces and objects

Routine use of these measures by individuals and their families will increase community resilience and readiness for responding to an outbreak.

## NPIs for COVID-19 Outbreaks in Communities

- **Personal Protective Measures.** During an outbreak in your community, CDC recommends the everyday preventive measures listed above—especially *staying home when sick*—and taking these additional measures:
  - Keeping away from others who are sick.
  - Limiting face-to-face contact with others as much as possible
  - Consulting with your healthcare provider if you or your household members are at high risk for COVID-19 complications
  - Wearing a facemask if advised to do so by your healthcare provider or by a public health official
  - Staying home when a household member is sick with respiratory disease symptoms, if instructed to do so by public health officials or a health care provider (Voluntary Home Quarantine)
- **Community Measures.** If COVID-19 disease is occurring in your community, state and local public health authorities may decide to implement:
  - Temporary closures or dismissals of childcare facilities and schools
  - Other social distancing measures that increase the physical space between people, including:
    - Workplace social distancing measures, such as replacing in-person meetings with teleworking
    - Modifying, postponing, or cancelling mass gatherings.

Decisions about the implementation of community measures will be made by local and state officials, in consultation with federal officials as appropriate, and based on the scope of the outbreak and the severity of illness. Implementation will require extensive community engagement and ongoing and transparent public health communications.

### Footnote

<sup>1</sup>Additional information about the evidence base for each NPI and considerations for their implementation is available in: [Community Mitigation Guidelines to Prevent Pandemic Influenza — United States, 2017](#).

### Additional Resources:

[Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), February 2020](#)

## Prevention & Treatment

### Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For information about handwashing, see [CDC's Handwashing](#) website

## When and How to Wash Your Hands

**Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Learn when and how you should wash your hands to stay healthy.**

Wash Your Hands Often to Stay Healthy

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** [changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet](#)
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.

2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### [Why? Read the science behind the recommendations.](#)

#### Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

**Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,**

- Sanitizers do **not** get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

**Caution!** Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Keep it out of reach of young children and supervise their use. Learn more [here](#).

#### How to use hand sanitizer

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

For information specific to healthcare, see [CDC's Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#)

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. CDC does have [specific guidance for travelers](#).

## Treatment

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

## Symptoms

Reported illnesses have ranged from **mild symptoms to severe illness** and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure\***:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Call your healthcare professional if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you have recently traveled from an area with [widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19](#).

# How COVID-19 Spreads

Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

## Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

## Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily does the virus spread?

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.