

What to do if you are sick with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) March 20, 2020¹

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 infection, or if a healthcare provider or public health official has told you that COVID-19 infection is suspected because you have been exposed to a person with COVID-19, you must follow the home isolation instructions below. These steps will help prevent the disease from spreading to others in your household and community. You should also follow these instructions if you suspect that you have COVID-19, even if you do not have a known exposure. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath.

Stay home except to get medical care

You must not go outside your home unless you need medical care or in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transportation, Uber/Lyft, or taxis. If seeking medical care, always call ahead to alert the healthcare provider that you have or may have COVID-19.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

As much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people in your home. You should use a separate bathroom, if available. The CDC currently recommends keeping 6 feet between yourself and others, if possible. Prohibit visitors to your home as much as possible.

Wear a face mask

You should wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle), pets, and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a face mask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a face mask if they enter your room.

Appropriate hygiene

Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If handwashing with soap is not possible, use alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to thoroughly cover all surfaces of your hands, then rub until they feel dry. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, or nose with unwashed hands. If you cough or sneeze, do so into your elbow or use a tissue to cover your mouth.

Avoid sharing household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean "high-touch" surfaces frequently

Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

¹ Please check the DPH website for updates, as these guidelines may change based on CDC recommendations. Visit www.dph.ga.gov, scroll down to "Additional COVID-19 Resources," and click on "DPH Isolation Guidance."

Monitor your symptoms

If you develop worsening symptoms (i.e., difficulty breathing) you should seek prompt medical attention. Be sure to call your healthcare provider before seeking care and tell them that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Wear a facemask before entering the healthcare facility to protect other patients and staff from being exposed.

If you have a medical emergency, call 911. Notify emergency services that you have COVID-19 infection. Put on a facemask if possible before emergency services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

You must remain under home isolation precautions until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
AND
- other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
AND
- at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

Contact information for the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH): 1-866-PUB-HLTH (782-4584)