

# Tips to prevent coronavirus transmission

- [Hand-washing](#)
- [Not touching the face](#)
- [Limiting contact](#)
- [Staying home if unwell](#)
- [Calling ahead for medical help](#)
- [While traveling](#)
- [In the household](#)
- [In the workplace](#)
- [At school](#)
- [When to use face masks](#)
- [Summary](#)

The global spread of coronavirus means that many people will now need to take certain action steps to help reduce its transmission.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which some people refer to as coronavirus, causes coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19).

People can take the following everyday actions to help protect themselves and others from this illness:

## Tips to Prevent Coronavirus Transmission



Wash your hands frequently



Cough and sneeze into the elbow



Dispose of used tissues immediately



Avoid contact with others



Avoid crowds and public gatherings



Avoid touching your face



Clean all shared surfaces frequently



Avoid all nonessential travel



Call ahead before going to a clinic or hospital



Isolate yourself if sick or at risk of complications



Work from home if possible



Only wear a mask if you are sick, have COVID-19, or are caring for someone with it

# Hand-washing

Regular hand-washing is one of the main ways to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus.

People should use plenty of soap and water to wash their hands for at least [20 seconds](#), especially after:

- traveling on public transport
- being in a public place
- coughing
- sneezing
- blowing their nose

If a person is not able to use soap and water, they can use a hand sanitizer containing at least [60%](#) alcohol.

Washing the hands with soap or hand sanitizer helps kill any viruses on the hands that people may have come into contact with.

[Learn more about the proper hand-washing technique in this article.](#)

*Stay informed with [live updates](#) on the current COVID-19 outbreak and visit our [coronavirus hub](#) for more advice on prevention and treatment.*

## Avoiding touching the face

People should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with their hands, especially if they are unwashed. This can help limit the spread of germs and reduce the likelihood of them getting sick.

The hands come into contact with several surfaces throughout the day, and they may pick up viruses this way. A new report suggests that SARS-CoV-2 can remain on certain surfaces for [up to 3 days](#).

If a person then touches their face, viruses can transfer to the eyes, nose, or mouth and enter the body.

## Limiting contact with others

People should take care to avoid coming into close contact with others — especially those who are older, unwell, or have symptoms of the virus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend staying [6 feet](#) away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

This is because when a person coughs or sneezes, small droplets containing the virus leave their mouth and nose. Other people can then breathe these droplets in and catch any virus that the droplets may contain.

If a person lives within a community where coronavirus is present, the relevant government will likely have additional instructions on how to implement social distancing. These may include:

- staying home from work or working from home
- avoiding contact with anyone who is not a member of the household
- prohibiting large gatherings of people
- closing nonessential services, including bars and restaurants

This is especially important for people at [higher risk](#) of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with the following underlying health conditions:

- heart disease
- lung disease
- diabetes

People at higher risk may also need to take extra precautions, such as self-isolating by staying at home.

*The CDC [recommend](#) that all people wear cloth face masks in public places where it is difficult to maintain a 6-foot distance from others. This will help slow the spread of the virus from asymptomatic people or people who do not know they have contracted the virus. Cloth face masks should be worn while continuing to practice physical distancing. Instructions for making masks at home can be found [here](#). **Note:** It is critical that surgical masks and N95 respirators are reserved for healthcare workers.*

## Staying home if unwell

If a person has mild symptoms of COVID-19, they can self-isolate by staying at home and avoiding contact with others.

Even if a person is unsure whether they have COVID-19, a common cold, or something else, it is best to stay inside and rest.

[CORONAVIRUS NEWS](#)

### Stay informed about COVID-19

Get the latest updates and research-backed information on the novel coronavirus direct to your inbox.

Enter your email

**SIGN UP**

Your [privacy](#) is important to us

# Calling ahead for medical attention

Anyone with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing in an area with a COVID-19 outbreak should seek medical advice.

Calling ahead before visiting a healthcare facility allows healthcare providers to reduce the risk of the virus spreading to others.

For example, they may have the person use a designated entrance at the hospital, which helps keep them away from vulnerable patients.

## Prevention tips while traveling

If a person is traveling, all of the above prevention advice still applies and may help reduce the risk of contracting the virus.

The [CDC](#) recommend that anyone at high risk of COVID-19 complications avoid cruise and air travel.

People at lower risk can assess the potential risks of traveling, then decide whether it is best to postpone or cancel their travel plans.

While the situation is constantly developing, many countries discourage nonessential travel and some have closed their borders to certain groups.

The [CDC](#) recommend that people avoid all nonessential travel to the following places:

- China

- Iran
- South Korea
- most of Europe

People are returning to the United States from any of these places may need to stay at home for **14 days** to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to others.

If they are planning to travel within the U.S., they may wish to consider the number of cases of COVID-19 in the areas they are traveling to and from, as well as whether or not the trip is essential.

People should also consider risk factors such as their own health and the health of those around them.

There are also some prevention tips for different settings and situations to help a person protect themselves and others from coronavirus.

## **Prevention in the household**

The most valuable prevention method for the household is keeping all surfaces clean. A person should clean all surfaces that people touch regularly, including light switches, door handles, and countertops.

To do so, they can use water and a household detergent. For surfaces that are visibly dirty, a person may wish to use a detergent and then a disinfectant.

If a person in the household develops COVID-19, they can take the following steps to help prevent it from spreading:

- staying in a separate room or bedroom

- using a separate bathroom if possible
- cleaning and disinfecting bathroom surfaces after using them
- wearing a face mask when using communal areas
- not sharing food and drink with people who do not have the illness
- wearing gloves while cleaning and disinfecting any shared surfaces

## Prevention in the workplace

Employers and workers can reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission in the workplace by:

- cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces regularly
- encouraging regular hand-washing by putting up posters, supplying hand sanitizer, and providing access to soap and water
- communicating clearly to employees that people will need to stay at home if they display any symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild
- using conference calls to hold meetings, rather than meeting face to face, when possible
- getting employees to work from home whenever possible
- offering social, financial, and mental health support to help people limit physical contact as much as possible

## Prevention at school

Although older adults are more at risk of serious complications, children and teenagers can still carry SARS-CoV-2 and pass it to others.

Some ways to prevent transmission in schools include:

- displaying posters to encourage proper hand-washing
- frequently cleaning and disinfecting surfaces such as tables, backs of chairs, and door handles
- providing soap, water, and hand sanitizer
- limiting all nonessential meetings and events
- having sick children stay at home
- closing schools if necessary and implementing distance learning if possible
- providing support for students with concerns about COVID-19 and how it may affect them

## How and when to use face masks

According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), people will only need to wear a face mask if they are coughing, sneezing, or taking care of someone with COVID-19.

Face masks are only effective if a person uses them correctly. Take the following steps to use and dispose of a face mask correctly:

- Before touching the mask or the face, wash the hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Make sure that the mask covers the nose and mouth, with no gaps between the face and the mask.
- While wearing the mask, avoid touching it.
- If a person does touch the mask while wearing it, they should wash the hands again.

- Avoid reusing single-use masks.
- Do not write anything, such as a person's name, on the mask. This damages mask integrity and could allow contaminants to enter.
- Replace a mask if it becomes damp.
- Remove the mask by lifting the string at the back, rather than by touching the front.
- Discard used masks immediately into a closed garbage bin, then wash the hands again.

## Summary

People can take steps to prevent the spread of coronavirus and help protect themselves and others. Simple steps such as hand-washing and social distancing can be vital tools in reducing coronavirus's impact.

If a person has any symptoms of COVID-19, they should stay at home and wear a face mask around other people.

If they experience severe symptoms or have a higher risk of COVID-19 complications, they should seek medical advice as soon as possible.

It is also important to stay up-to-date on their local government's recommendations and cancelations.

[Check our live updates page daily for new information.](#)

- Public Health
- Flu / Cold / SARS
- Immune System / Vaccines
- Infectious Diseases / Bacteria / Viruses

Source: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/coronavirus-prevention#summary>