COVID-19
Coronavirus

In the past few years, you have likely become aware of COVID-19. It is important we continue to take actions to keep our families and communities protected from COVID-19. This resource provides information about how COVID-19 is a part of our lives now. It gives ideas for preventing COVID-19, like continuing to wear face masks and getting vaccines required by schools, jobs, and housing communities. Updated vaccines are now available to help protect people from getting sick with COVID-19. **It is safe to get the COVID, flu, and RSV vaccines at the same time.**

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a type of germ called a coronavirus.[1] COVID-19 causes sickness in the lungs and other parts of the body. The best way to prevent getting sick is to stay away from people sick with COVID-19 and to get the updated vaccine. The vaccines are safe and effective for preventing infection.

What are symptoms of COVID-19?

Some or all of the following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after contact with the virus:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Extreme tiredness
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell

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How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread by tiny water droplets carrying the virus. People can become sick by:

- Breathing in the droplets. This can happen when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, breathes, or talks
- Touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching objects covered in the droplets.

COVID-19 can be spread even by people who do not feel sick or have symptoms.

How can I protect myself, my family, and my community?

The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is by getting a COVID-19 vaccine. It is also important to get an updated COVID-19 vaccine each year. It's okay if you didn't get a vaccine previously, getting an updated vaccine this year will still be effective

The best way to protect your community, besides getting the vaccine, is by:

- The best way to protect your community, besides getting the vaccine, is by:
- Wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth
- Staying home if you are feeling sick
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick
- Using hand sanitizer
- Washing hands often with soap and water
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Covering your coughs and sneezes

References

1. CDC. About COVID-19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published June 13, 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/about/index.html
2. World Health Organization. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). World Health Organization. Published 2024. https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

What else should I know?

The COVID-19 vaccine has been tested. It is safe and effective for children ages 6 months and older. The COVID-19 vaccine protects groups who may be more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including:

- People ages 60 years and older
- People experiencing chronic health conditions
- People with weakened immune systems
- Children younger than 5 years old
- Pregnant people

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

- Stay home if you are feeling sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid close contact with people or animals
- Take a COVID test.

If you test **positive** for COVID-19, take care of your symptoms. Try to stay away from people, or wear a face mask if around others. If you test **negative**, take care of your symptoms and consider taking a COVID test in 24 hours.

Urgently seek medical care if you have any of these emergency symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Difficulty waking up or staying awake
- Blue colored lips or face
- Dehydration

People who are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness may be eligible for a treatment called Paxlovid. This medication must be started within 5 days of when COVID-19 symptoms start. Paxlovid is currently available to people 12 years and older.

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