When to Get
Medical Care for COVID

WE CAN DO THIS

APHA
AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

COVID is a virus that spreads from person to person. It can cause many different symptoms. Common symptoms can include:

- Sore throat
- Cough
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Congestion or runny nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Fever or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

When to get tested and treated

People who are more likely to get very sick need to start medical treatment for COVID within days after symptoms first appear.

Even if you're vaccinated, you're more likely than others to get very sick from COVID if any of these apply to you:

- You're 50 or older
- You have one or more health issues, such as severe asthma, diabetes, obesity, or chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions
- You have a compromised or weakened immune system

FDA has authorized or approved prescription medicines that can help protect you from getting very sick from COVID.

Don't wait. It's important to get tested quickly if you have symptoms of COVID. Prescription treatments need to be started within days after your symptoms start.

Even if your symptoms are mild, treating your COVID early with medicine prescribed by a doctor or authorized health care provider can make your infection less severe and help keep you out of the hospital.

It could save your life.

Learn more at cdc.gov/covidtreatment

———— WARNING ————

Never take any medicine or product to treat or prevent COVID unless a doctor has prescribed it to you. Doing so can be dangerous.

Always ask a doctor first before taking any new medicine, especially if you take medicines for other reasons.

When to get emergency medical care

Get emergency medical care (call 911) if you or someone you know has any of the following or has other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure
- New confusion

- Trouble waking up or staying awake
- Pale, gray, or blue–colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

How to manage your symptoms

- Let your doctor or health care provider know you have COVID as soon as possible so you can get treatment if you're more likely to get very sick from COVID.
- Stay home and rest for at least 5 days and until your symptoms improve and you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids.

- To help relieve fever and aches, you can take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen.
- To soothe a sore throat, you can gargle with warm salt water. You can also use throat lozenges, ice chips, or sore throat spray.
- To help ease congestion or a cough, you can use a humidifier or vaporizer to increase air moisture in your home. You can also use saline nasal drops or sprays.
- Don't smoke or vape.

How to prevent spreading COVID to others

- Wear a well-fitting mask (preferably an N95 or KN95 respirator) when you're near other people for at least 10 days after your symptoms began.
- Stay home for at least 5 days, except to get medical care.
- If you must leave your home, don't take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares like Uber or Lyft.
- As much as possible, stay in a specific room in your home, away from other people and pets. Use a separate bathroom if you can.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if you don't have soap and water.
- Bring as much fresh air into your home as possible. You can do this by opening your windows if it's safe to do so and weather permits. Also, filter the air in your home. You can do this by continuously running your air conditioning system or using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners.

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