



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

What should I do if there is an outbreak in my Community?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/faq.html>

During an outbreak, stay calm and put your preparedness plan to work. Follow the steps below:

Protect yourself and others.

- Stay home if you are sick. Keep away from people who are sick. Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet).

Put your household plan into action.

- **Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.** Be aware of temporary school dismissals in your area, as this may affect your household's daily routine.
- **Continue practicing everyday preventive actions.** Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily using a regular household detergent and water.
- **Notify your workplace as soon as possible if your regular work schedule changes.** Ask to work from home or take leave if you or someone in your household gets sick with [COVID-19 symptoms](#), or if your child's school is dismissed temporarily. [Learn how businesses and employers can plan for and respond to COVID-19.](#)
- **Stay in touch with others by phone or email.** If you have a chronic medical condition and live alone, ask family, friends, and health care providers to check on you during an outbreak. Stay in touch with family and friends, especially those at increased risk of developing severe illness, such as older adults and people with severe chronic medical conditions.

How do I prepare my children in case of COVID-19 outbreak in our community?

Outbreaks can be stressful for adults and children. Talk with your children about the outbreak, try to stay calm, and reassure them that they are safe. If appropriate, explain to them that most illness from COVID-19 seems to be mild. [Children respond differently to stressful situations than adults.](#)

What steps should parents take to protect children during a community outbreak?

This is a new virus and we are still learning about it, but so far, there does not seem to be a lot of illness in children. Most illness, including serious illness, is happening in adults of working age and older adults. If there cases of COVID-19 that impact your child's school, the school may dismiss students. Keep track of school dismissals in your community. Read or watch local media sources that report school dismissals. If schools are dismissed temporarily, use alternative childcare arrangements, if needed.

If your child/children become sick with COVID-19, notify their childcare facility or school. Talk with teachers about classroom assignments and activities they can do from home to keep up with their schoolwork.

Discourage children and teens from gathering in other public places while school is dismissed to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

What steps can my family take to reduce our risk of getting COVID-19?

Practice everyday preventive actions to help reduce your risk of getting sick and remind everyone in your home to do the same. These actions are especially important for older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- 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.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles).

Should I use soap and water or a hand sanitizer to protect against COVID-19?

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.