



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If You Are Immunocompromised, Protect Yourself From COVID-19

Many conditions and treatments can weaken a person's immune system (making them "immunocompromised"). Some of these include:

- Cancer
- Bone marrow transplant
- Solid organ transplant
- Stem cells for cancer treatment
- Genetic immune deficiencies
- [HIV](#)
- Use of oral or intravenous corticosteroids or other medicines called immunosuppressants that lower the body's ability to fight some infections (e.g., mycophenolate, sirolimus, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, etanercept, rituximab)

Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19

People with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of getting severely sick from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. They may also remain infectious for a longer period of time than others with COVID-19, but we cannot confirm this until we learn more about this new virus.

Prevent COVID-19

If you are immunocompromised, the best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to this virus. For details, see CDC's advice for [what you can do to prepare for COVID-19](#) and [how to protect yourself and others](#).

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid leaving home as much as possible and practice [social distancing](#).
 - If you must leave home, avoid other people as much as possible by practicing social distancing. Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) between you and people outside your household.
 - Avoid large gatherings or places where people congregate.
 - Have supplies, food, and medicine delivered to your home.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a [cloth face covering](#) when around others to protect other people in case you are infected, and ask others to do the same.
 - Remember, do NOT place cloth face coverings on children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

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- Clean AND disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#). This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

Steps You Can Take to Protect Your Health

- Continue your regular treatment plan. Don't stop any medications or treatments without talking to your doctor.
 - Discuss any concerns about your treatment with your doctor.
 - Keep your regularly scheduled medical appointments.
 - Talk to your doctor about steps they are taking to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the office.
 - Use telehealth services whenever possible if recommended by your doctor.
 - Ensure that you are getting necessary tests prescribed by your doctor.
 - Seek urgent medical care if you are feeling unwell.
- Talk to your doctor, insurer, and pharmacist about getting an emergency supply of prescription medications. Make sure you have at least 30 days of prescription medications, over-the-counter medicines, and supplies on hand in case you need or want to stay home for several weeks. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about ways to receive your medications by mail.
- Take steps to care for your [emotional health](#). Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. It is natural to feel concerned or stressed about COVID-19. Learn more about stress and coping with anxiety [here](#). **Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way** of your daily activities for several days in a row.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others:
 - Call 911 if you feel like you want to harm yourself or others
 - Visit the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) [🔗](#), call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
 - Visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) [🔗](#) or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224
 - Visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) [🔗](#) or call 1-800-273-8255 and TTY or text 1-800-799-4889

Treatment of COVID-19

- At this time, there is no Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved treatment for COVID-19. There is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Treatment is currently aimed at relieving symptoms, and for hospitalized patients, supporting vital organ function during severe illness.

Additional Information for Specific Conditions & Risk Factors

If you have cancer or have survived cancer

If you have cancer now or had cancer in the past, you might need to take special steps to protect your health:

- Chemotherapy is an important tool to treat cancer. Although some types of chemotherapy can weaken the immune system, cancer patients and survivors should continue to take their chemotherapy as directed by their doctor.
- Do not change your cancer treatment plan without discussing it with your doctor.
- **Watch out for fever.** Take your temperature any time you feel warm, flushed, chilled, very fatigued, or not well. **Call your doctor right away if you have a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.**
 - [Know the signs and symptoms of infection](#). Infection during the course of cancer treatment can be very serious. Call your doctor right away if you notice any of the signs and symptoms of an infection.

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- Find out from your doctor when your white blood cell count is likely to be the lowest, since this is when you're most at risk for infection.
 - If you have to go to the emergency room, tell the person checking you in that you are a cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy. Fever during chemotherapy treatment is a medical emergency and you should be seen quickly.
- Discuss any concerns about your chemotherapy or other cancer treatments with your oncologist and primary healthcare provider.
- Learn more about [Types of Cancer](#), [Risk Factors and Screening for Cancer](#) and [Preventing Infections](#) while undergoing treatment for cancer.

If you have had a bone marrow transplant, solid organ transplant, or stem cells for cancer treatment

If you take medications that weaken your immune system, called immunosuppressant medications:

- Do not change or stop taking medicines without talking to your doctor. Stopping or changing medicine can cause serious health problems.

If you were born with immune deficiencies

Some people are born with or develop immune deficiencies due to genetics. Examples include common variable immune deficiency, selective IgA deficiency, severe combined immunodeficiency, chronic granulomatous disease, and complement deficiencies.

- If you take medicines to help boost your immune system, do not change or stop them without talking to your doctor.

If you have HIV

The risk of serious illness from COVID-19 for people with HIV is not yet known. If you have [HIV](#) and a low CD4 cell count or are not on HIV treatment, you might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

- Do not change or stop taking medicines without talking to your doctor. Stopping or changing medicine can cause serious health problems.
- For more details, see CDC's [Information about COVID for people with HIV](#).

If you are using oral or intravenous corticosteroids or other medicines that lower your immune system's response

Some medical conditions are treated with medications that can weaken the immune system; these medicines are called immunosuppressants. Common medical conditions that are sometimes treated with immunosuppressants include [rheumatoid arthritis](#), [lupus](#), and [inflammatory bowel disease](#).

- Do not change or stop taking medicines without talking to your doctor. Stopping or changing medicine can cause serious health problems.

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)