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# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Older Adults

Updated June 25, 2020

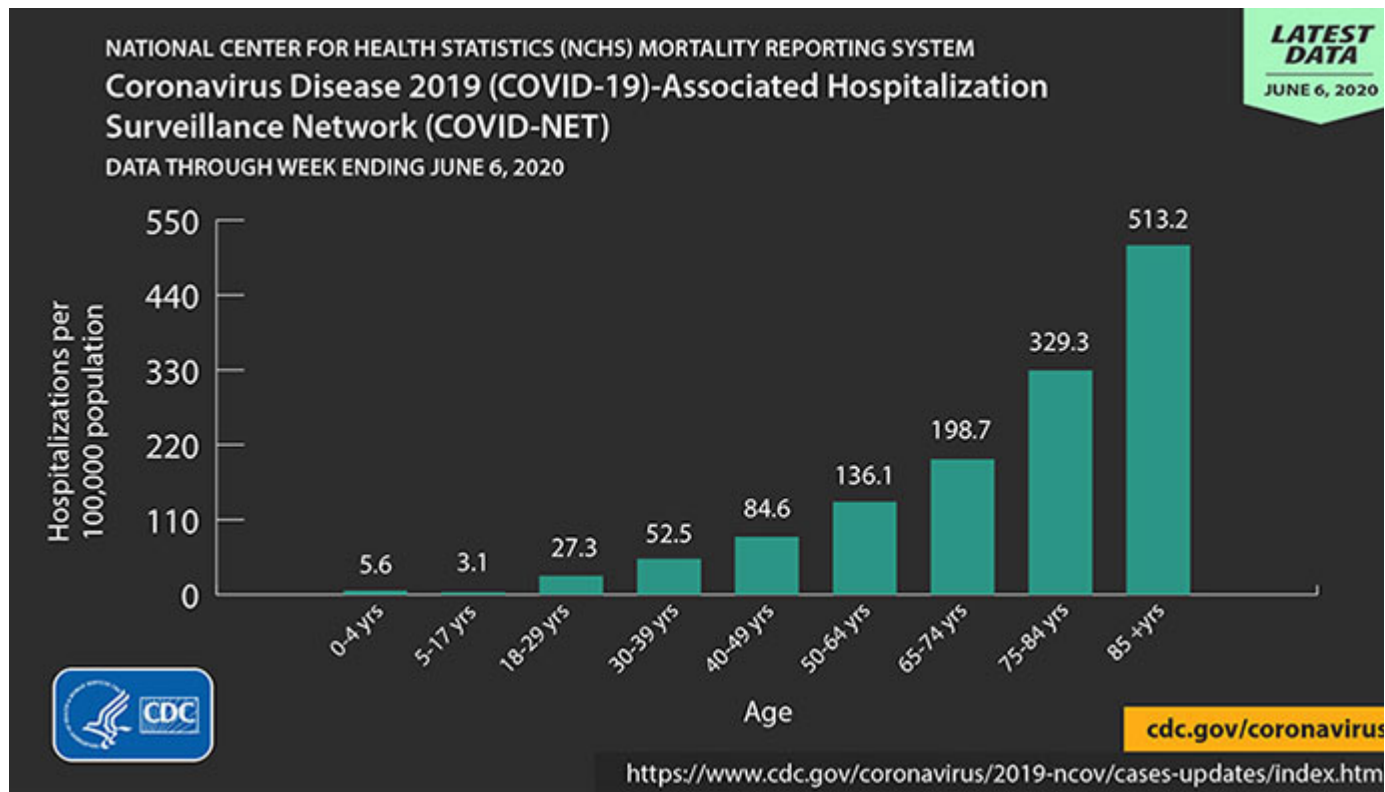
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Among adults, the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older illness means that the person with COVID-19 may require hospitalization, intensive care, or breathe, or they may even die.

### Risk for Severe Illness Increases with Age

As you get older, your risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases. For example, people in their 70s are at a higher risk for severe illness than people in their 40s. Similarly, people in their 60s or 70s are, in general, at a higher risk for severe illness than people in their 50s. The greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 is in people who are 75 and older.

There are also other factors that can increase your risk for severe illness, such as having [underlying conditions](#). By understanding the factors that put you at an increased risk, you can make informed decisions about the precautions to take in your daily life.



As you get older, your risk of being hospitalized for COVID-19 increases. Everyone, especially older adults, should take [steps to protect themselves](#) from COVID-19.

In general, your risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19 increases as you get older. Most COVID-19-related deaths reported in the United States have been among adults aged 65 years and older.

## CDC Has Information For Older Adults at Higher Risk

**8** out of **10** COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults 65 years old and older.

### Reduce your risk of getting COVID-19.

It is especially important for people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, to protect themselves from getting COVID-19.

Visit [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for steps to reduce your risk of getting sick.

The best way to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 is to take steps to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19.

- Limit your interactions with other people as much as possible.
- Take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, get in touch with your healthcare provider.

## Venturing out into a public setting? What to you go.

As communities and businesses across the United States are opening, you may be thinking about going to [public activities](#), [running errands](#), and attending [events and gatherings](#). There is no way to ensure you will not get an infection, so it is important to understand the risks and know how to be as safe as possible.

People at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and those who live with them, should take steps before [deciding to go out](#) and ensure they are taking steps to [protect themselves](#). Considering taking protective measures may be difficult, such as activities where social distancing can't be practiced. People at increased risk of severe illness should take steps to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19 to protect themselves, their loved ones, and others who are at increased risk of severe illness.

In general, the more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them, the longer you interact with them, and the more interaction, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19.

- If you decide to engage in public activities, continue to protect yourself by [practicing](#)

- Keep these items on hand and use them when venturing out: a cloth face covering, t at least 60% alcohol, if possible.
- If possible, avoid others who are not wearing [cloth face coverings](#) or ask others arou coverings.

## Are you considering in-person visits with family ar are some things to consider to help make your visit possible:

### When to delay or cancel a visit

- Delay or cancel a visit if you or your visitors have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or have bee COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Anyone who has had [close contact](#) with a person with COVID-19 should [stay home a](#)

In general, the more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them, interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. So, [think about](#):

- How many people will you interact with?
- Can you keep 6 feet of space between you and others?
- Will you be outdoors or indoors?
- What's the length of time that you will be interacting with people?

### Encourage social distancing during your visit

- Visit with your friends and family **outdoors**, when possible. If this is not feasible, ma well-ventilated (for example, open windows or doors) and large enough to accommo
- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing. People from the same house and don't need to be 6 feet apart from each other.
- Consider activities where social distancing can be maintained, like sidewalk chalk art
- Try to avoid close contact with your visitors. For example, don't shake hands, elbow l verbally greet them.
- If possible, avoid others who are not wearing cloth face coverings or ask others arou coverings.

- Consider keeping a list of people you visited or who visited you and when the visit occurred. [Contract tracing](#) if someone becomes sick.

## Wear cloth face coverings

- [Cloth face coverings](#) should be worn over the nose and mouth. Cloth face coverings is difficult to stay at least 6 feet apart from others or when people are indoors to help reduce the spread of the virus.
- Cloth face coverings may slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have been exposed from transmitting it to others
  - Wearing a cloth face covering helps protect others in case you're infected, while you should they be infected.
- **Who should NOT use cloth face coverings:** Children under age 2 or anyone who has a mental or physical disability that makes it difficult to use, is unconscious, or is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

## Wash hands often

- Everyone should [wash their hands](#) for at least 20 seconds at the beginning and end of each gathering, or whenever you think your hands may have become contaminated.
- If soap and water are not readily available, such as with outdoor visits or activities, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Remind guests to wash or sanitize their hands before serving or eating food.
- Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so visitors do not share towels. If possible, have a dedicated area available for guests to use.

## Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items

- Encourage your visitors to bring their own food and drinks.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between uses.
- If you choose to use any shared items that are reusable (e.g., seating covers, tablecloths, etc.), clean and sanitize them after the event.

# If you are thinking about participating in an gathering:

If you are at increased risk for severe illness, consider avoiding high-risk gatherings. The risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 increases as follows:

**Lowest risk:** Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.

**More risk:** Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different locations are at least 6 feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, do not share objects, and come from the same town, city, or county).

**Higher risk:** Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.

**Highest risk:** Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

## Stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic

Staying healthy during the pandemic is important. Talk to your healthcare provider about other preventive services you are up to date to help prevent you from becoming ill with other

- It is particularly important for those at increased risk of severe illness, including older adults, to get recommended vaccinations against influenza and pneumococcal disease.
- Remember the importance of staying [physically active](#) and practicing healthy habits.

If you have an underlying medical condition, you should continue to follow your treatment plan.

- Continue your medicines and do not change your treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider.
- Have at least a 30-day supply of prescription and non-prescription medicines. [Talk to your healthcare provider and pharmacist](#) about getting an extra supply (i.e., more than 30 days) of prescription medicines to reduce your trips to the pharmacy.
- Do not delay getting emergency care for your underlying medical condition because hospital emergency departments have contingency infection prevention plans to protect you from getting COVID-19.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about your underlying medical condition and think that you may have COVID-19. If you need emergency help, call 911 right away.
- If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest [community health center](#).



## Stress & coping

You may feel increased stress during this pandemic. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming emotions. Learn about [stress and coping](#).

If you think you may have COVID-19 or were exposed to COVID-19:

- If you have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, get in touch with your healthcare provider with [when you feel sick](#). You can use CDC's [self-checker](#) to help you make decisions.
- If you or someone you know has COVID-19 emergency warning signs (trouble breathing, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face), **seek emergency care**.
- If you think you might have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider. If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest [community health center](#) [↗](#) or [health department](#) [↗](#).



## Symptoms

[Symptoms](#) of COVID-19 can range from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms typically appear 2 to 14 days after exposure.

In some cases, older adults and people of any age with underlying health conditions may experience symptoms that are not typically seen in others, or they may take longer than others to develop fever and other symptoms.

## Fever symptoms

In older adults (aged 65 and older), normal body temperature can be lower than in younger adults. Additionally, fever temperatures can also be lower in older adults.

If you are an older adult experiencing fever or other [symptoms](#) and want to get tested, contact your healthcare provider first. You can also visit your [state](#) or [local](#) [↗](#) health department's website to look for the testing. If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest [community health center](#) [↗](#).

department.

If you are caring for a patient aged 65 or older, be aware that a single reading higher than 100.4°F (38°C), or readings above 99°F (37.2°C), or a rise in temperature greater than 2°F (1.1°C) above the baseline temperature may be a sign of infection





## Develop a care plan

A care plan summarizes your health conditions, medicines, healthcare providers, emergency care options (for example, advance directives). Complete your care plan in consultation with your healthcare provider, if needed, with help from a family member or home nurse aide.

A care plan can have benefits beyond the current pandemic. You can update your care plan if you have a change in your health or medicines. Care plans can help reduce emergency hospitalizations and improve overall medical management for people with a chronic health condition, leading to a better quality of life.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, having a care plan is an important part of emergency preparedness.

- [Guidance on how to develop your emergency preparedness care plan.](#)
- [Download a fillable care plan form](#)  [5 pages]
- [Serious Illness Care Program COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#) 



## Steps to reduce risk of getting sick

There are things you can do to reduce your risk of getting sick.

- Keep space between yourself and others (stay 6 feet away, which is about two arm lengths).
- [Wash your hands](#) often.



- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Then wash yo
- Take precautions as you go about your [daily life](#) and [attend events](#).
- [Clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and things you touch often.
- [What You Can Do](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself](#)



## Older adult living facilities

If you, a family member, or friend lives in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or other you may be concerned about COVID-19.

To protect friends and family members in these facilities, CDC has advised that long-ter

- Restrict visitors,
- Require or recommend visitors wear [cloth face coverings](#) over their nose and mou
- Regularly check healthcare workers and residents for fevers and symptoms, and
- Limit activities within the facility to keep residents distanced from each other and :

Learn more about the risks among people who live in [nursing homes or long-term care guidance for nursing homes and long-term care facilities](#).

## Digital Resources



## What Older Adults Need to Know

Preventative actions to help protect older adults.



### More Information

[People at Higher Risk](#)

[Cases & Latest Updates](#)

[Prevent Getting Sick](#)

[Guidance for Caregivers of in Community Settings](#)

[If You Are Sick](#)

[People Who Live in a Nursing Facility](#)

[Symptoms & Testing](#)

## COVID-2019 Menu



Coronavirus Home



Your Health



Community, Work & School



Healthcare Workers



Laboratories



Health Departments



Cases, Data & Surveillance



More Resources