

## How to care for yourself or others with COVID-19

Most people with COVID-19 have milder illness and are able to recover at home without medical care. Follow these steps if you or someone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; or at least two of the following: fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or a new loss of taste or smell. This list is not all inclusive.

### SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE, IF NEEDED

- **Connect by phone with your healthcare provider or a nurse consulting line**, especially if the sick person is age 60 or older or is at risk for severe illness because of a medical condition (examples: diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, or a weakened immune system). If you do not have a healthcare provider, call the King County COVID-19 call center between 8 AM – 7 PM at 206-477-3977.
- **Pay attention to the symptoms.** If the symptoms get worse, call a healthcare provider for guidance.
- **Watch for emergency signs.** Call 9-1-1 if the sick person has:
  - Trouble breathing
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - Unusual feelings of confusion or not able to respond
  - Lips or face have a blue or purple tint
- **Need help finding a doctor or getting health insurance?** Call the [Community Health Access Program \(CHAP\)](#): 1 (800) 756-5437 or the [Help Me Grow Washington Hotline](#): 1(800) 322-2588.

### Provide comfort

- Choose one person in the household to be the main caretaker.
- Make sure the sick person gets plenty of rest.
- Use over-the-counter medication for fever, sore throat and general discomfort. Follow instructions from your healthcare provider.

### Prevent dehydration

**Encourage the sick person to drink liquids** (water, broth, herbal tea, juice, etc.).

- Offer small amounts of fluid frequently, even if they do not feel thirsty.
- If the sick person is not eating solid food, give fluids that contain sugars and salts, such as Pedialyte® or Lytren® (undiluted), broth, or sports drinks (diluted half and half with water).

Make sure the sick person avoids drinking alcohol, caffeinated, or diet drinks. Do not use tobacco.

**Watch for signs of dehydration.** Someone who is dehydrated may:

- Be weak or unresponsive (if someone is unresponsive, call 9-1-1)
- Have a dry mouth and tongue
- Produce less urine, which becomes dark in color.

**Check for dehydration:**

- Gently pinch layers of skin between your thumb and forefinger for 1 second (best done on the belly skin of a child and on the upper chest of an adult).
- Normally, the skin will flatten out into its usual shape right away. If sick person is dehydrated, the skin will “tent” or take 2 or more seconds to flatten out.

**If the sick person is dehydrated:**

- Give plenty of fluid through frequent sips or spoonfuls over a 4-hour period.
- Watch for an increase in urination and a lighter color of the urine.
- Call a healthcare provider if dehydration worsens.

**PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN THE HOME**

Anyone ill should:

- **Stay home**, except to get medical care.
- **Call ahead before visiting your doctor.**
- **Use a separate bedroom and bathroom** if possible. If that's not an option, try to stay at least 6 feet apart from each other when you're sleeping and interacting

Caregivers should:

- **Wear a cloth face mask and gloves when providing care**, if available. [Cloth face masks](#) should be worn by the sick person and caregiver when in close contact. Bandanas or other cloth that covers the mouth and nose can serve as masks.
- **Clean surfaces throughout the home daily.** Use soap and water or other household cleaners, then use a disinfectant. If you don't have a disinfectant, a paper towel dipped in 60% or greater isopropyl alcohol will kill the virus.
- **Wash laundry thoroughly.** Keep the laundry away from your body. Wash your hands immediately after handling laundry.

Everyone in the household should:

- **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
- **Clean hands thoroughly and often.** Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Avoid sharing personal household items** (dishes, towels, bedding, etc.).

**Support for stress and anxiety**

If you are sick with COVID-19 or caring for someone who is sick, it can be stressful and worrisome. When talking to your doctor, talk about your anxieties to get support. You can also call the King County 24-Hour Crisis Line at 1-866-427-4747 for professional services and support.

**For more information**

“What to Do if You Are Sick” from the CDC: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

“What should I do if my child gets COVID-19”: [www.kingcounty.gov/covid/parents](https://www.kingcounty.gov/covid/parents)