

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Checklist: Older Persons

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. Depending on the severity of the outbreak, public health officials might recommend community actions to reduce exposures to COVID-19. These actions can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the impact of disease.

If you are an [older adult or someone who has severe chronic medical conditions](#) such as heart or lung disease, or diabetes, you are at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. It is very important for you to take steps to stay healthy.

Protect Yourself

Stay informed and up to date with your local news for COVID-19 updates.

Take [everyday actions](#) before, during, and after the event to protect yourself and others:

- Stay home when sick.
- Avoid crowds and people who are sick.
- Delay all travel, including plane trips, and especially avoid going on any type of cruise.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Then wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If you don't have soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- [Clean AND THEN disinfect surfaces](#) and things you touch often, such as tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, elevator buttons, handrails, countertops, remote controls, shared electronic equipment, shared exercise equipment, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Keep your homes cleaned and disinfected by following these [instructions](#).

Get ready in case you get COVID-19

[Make a plan for if you get sick:](#)

Call your doctor about [checking for symptoms that might be COVID-19](#).

Stay in touch with others by phone or e-mail. You might need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.

Seek out a “buddy” who will check on and help care for you if you become sick.

Have an emergency contact list.

Have a [list of your daily medicationpdf icon](#) and time of day you take them, so a caregiver will be able to help you if you get sick.

Determine who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick.

[Make sure you have enough supplies](#)

Contact your doctor to ask about getting extra medications (at least a 30 day supply) to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a few weeks.

If you cannot pick up extra medications, consider using mail-order.

Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (e.g., tissues) to treat fever and other symptoms. Many older adults will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.

Have enough household items and groceries so that you will be comfortable staying home for a few weeks.

Continue to take [everyday steps](#) to stay healthy: wash your hands often, do not touch your face, avoid sick people and crowds, and disinfect surfaces.

[Stay home](#) as much as possible. [Avoid crowds](#) as much as possible.

Consider steps you can take to stay away from other people. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).

[If there is a COVID-19 outbreak in your community](#)

Pay attention to your local news and follow the steps from your local health officials.

Continue to take [everyday steps](#) to stay healthy: wash your hands often, do not touch your face, avoid sick people and crowds, and disinfect surfaces.

[Stay home](#) as much as possible.

If you must leave your house

[Avoid crowds](#) as much as possible

When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact, and wash your hands often.

Consider steps you can take to stay away from other people. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).

Pay attention to your health: If you develop COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and trouble breathing, call your doctor.

If you get sick and think you have COVID-19

[Use your plan](#)

Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs

- Symptoms include, fever, cough, and trouble breathing.
- If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor first. Tell them that you think you might have COVID-19. This will help them take care of you and protect others.
- If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home. Follow your doctor's orders and CDC tips for [how to take care of yourself at home](#).
- Keep your friends and family up to date on your health. Let them know if you need anything. You should not leave your house when you are sick.

Know when to get emergency help

- If you get worsening symptoms, call 911 right away:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face
- *This list does not include everything. Please call your doctor or 911 for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

Caregivers, get ready

Community Organizations

Community preparedness planning for COVID-19 should include older adults and people with chronic illness and disabilities, and the organizations that support them in their communities, to ensure their needs are taken into consideration.

Assisted-living facilities, long-term care facilities, continuing care retirement communities, and independent living facilities

Be vigilant to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Screen staff and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19, cough, fever, or difficulty breathing.

- Information for [retirement communities and independent living facilities](#)
- Information for [information on long-term care facilities](#)

Identify alternatives, such as telehealth, to ensure residents continue to receive care in the event regular services are disrupted.

Identify individuals who may have unique medical, access, and functional needs. Work with them to develop a plan if they or their caretakers become ill.

Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. This includes services provided by hospitals and other healthcare facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, and the post office.

Plan alternative ways for residents to socially interact, including replacing in-person social meetings with video or telephone, or plan to meet in small groups in open outdoor spaces while maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between persons. Stagger meals and activities.

Keep your community informed about COVID-19. Consider informing residents using printed materials, such as easy-to-understand handouts and by high-

visibility posters in high traffic locations. Also implement video resources if possible.

Family and Caregivers

Continue to take [everyday steps](#) to stay health: wash hands often, avoid touching your face, avoid sick people and crowds, and disinfect surfaces.

Have a COVID-19 plan for yourself.

Review your loved ones' COVID-19 plan

- [Know what medicationspdf icon](#) your loved one is taking and see if you can help them get extra on hand.
- Monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed. Create a back-up plan.
- Stock up on food pantry items to have on hand in your home to minimize store trips.
- If you care for a loved one living in a facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently, and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.
- Find out if your loved one's medical providers have a formal "telehealth" system, and if not, ask if they can still communicate by telephone (instead of visits) in case there are interruptions to regular services.