

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Older Adults

Older adults (adults over age 60) might be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19, as well as being at higher risk of death due to COVID-19. This guidance provides steps to take to reduce your risk of becoming infected with COVID-19.

Signs and symptoms in older adults

COVID-19 can present with a variety of symptoms in older adults and can progress rapidly. It is important to promptly reach out to your medical provider if you experience symptoms.

- Early symptoms in older adults may be non-specific, such as loss of appetite or unusual fatigue.
- Symptoms may also include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Here are some actions you can take now to reduce your risk of getting sick:

- Stay at home and avoid close contact with other people, if possible.
- Keep away from people who are sick.
- Wear a cloth face covering or facemask at all times if you need to go out in public.
- Keep space between yourself and others (stay 6 feet away, which is about two arm lengths).
- Clean your hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially before preparing or eating food, before and after using the toilet, and after blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, tables, doorknobs and door handles, light switches, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Be extra careful about taking your medications exactly as prescribed.
- Keep a 90-day supply of your medications on hand, and a two to three week supply of fever-reducing and other over-the-counter medications on hand to treat cold and flu-like symptoms in case you do fall ill with COVID-19 and need to remain at home while sick.
- Prepare a document that summarizes your health conditions, medications, healthcare providers, and emergency contacts and keep it in a visible location, in case emergency care is needed.
- **Do not delay getting care** of any underlying condition because of COVID-19.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have concerns about your medical conditions or if you get sick and think you may have COVID-19. If you need emergency help, call 911.

The recommendations will continue to be updated as we learn more about COVID-19. Please visit <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/> regularly for the most current information.