

**Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19):
Guidance for People with Chronic Health Conditions**

People with certain medical conditions are at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19. This guidance provides steps to take to reduce your risk of becoming infected with COVID-19.

ADULTS:

<p>Based on current information, adults with the following conditions <u>are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer • Chronic kidney disease, • Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), • Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant, • Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher), • Pregnancy, • Heart conditions, such as heart failure, • Sickle cell disease, • Smoking • Type 2 diabetes mellitus 	<p>Adults with the following conditions <u>might be at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma (moderate-to-severe), • Cerebrovascular disease, • Cystic fibrosis, • Hypertension or high blood pressure, • Other immunocompromised states (e.g., from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of steroids or use of other immunosuppressant medications), • Neurologic conditions, such as dementia, • Liver disease, • Overweight (BMI of 25 or higher) • Pulmonary fibrosis, • Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder), • Type 1 diabetes mellitus.
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CHILDREN:

Compared to adults, children have been less severely affected by COVID-19. However, children with underlying medical conditions are at an increased risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19.

Based on current information, children with the following conditions might be at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma and other chronic lung disease • Chronic kidney disease • Congenital heart disease • Diabetes • Sickle cell disease • Inherited metabolic disorders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe genetic or neurologic disorders • Immunosuppression due to malignancy or immune-weakening medications • Obesity • Medical complexity |
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Considerations for Going Out in Public

As the National Capitol Region reopens, you may be thinking about going out in public more (e.g., visiting friends and family, running errands, going to events).

People at higher risk of serious COVID-19 infection AND the people who live with them should think carefully before going out, choose activities wisely and take measures to be as safe as possible.

Keep in mind: The more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them and the longer the interactions, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19.

Actions You Can Take to Reduce Your Risk of Getting Sick:

Practice Everyday Prevention Measures

- **Stay home if you are sick** or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- **Practice social distancing.** Stay at least 6 feet from other people who don't live in your household.
- **Always wear a cloth face covering** when you leave your home. (For more information about cloth face coverings and masks for the public see DC Health guidance at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance)
- Avoid being around others who are sick.
- Perform frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
 - Key times to perform hand hygiene include:
 - Before preparing or eating food,
 - After using the toilet,
 - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings,
 - After handling another person's belongings, and
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

How to Stay Safe When Socializing

- **Staying at home and participating only in virtual events remains safest.**
- **Avoid activities that may be at higher risk such as:**
 - **Indoor events,**
 - **Crowds,**
 - **Events where social distancing will be difficult to maintain,**
 - **Events which include visitors from outside of the National Capitol Region.**
- Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities. Visit with your friends and family outdoors if possible. If not possible, make sure the indoor space is well ventilated (for example, open windows or doors).
- Make sure to wear a face mask and practice social distancing indoors and outdoors.
- Avoid close contact with visitors (e.g., don't shake hands or hug, instead wave and verbally greet them).
- Delay or cancel a visit if you or a visitor feels sick or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
- Take tissues and hand sanitizer with you when you go out and wash hands frequently.

Be Prepared and Stay Healthy

- Have at least a 30-day supply of your medications on hand. Continue taking your medications exactly as prescribed.
- Stay physically active and practice healthy habits to help you cope with stress.
- **Keep up with your regular vaccinations such as the influenza (flu)**

and pneumococcal vaccines.

- Getting a flu vaccine during the 2020-2021 flu season is more important than ever because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- People at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are generally the same people at high risk for severe illness from flu.
- COVID-19 and flu share many of the same symptoms, making it hard to tell the difference based on symptoms alone.
- It is possible to be infected with both COVID-19 and flu at the same time.
- For more information about the similarities and differences between COVID-19 and influenza see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: [cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm)
- 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 for your underlying condition(s) because of COVID-19.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have concerns about your medical conditions or if you get sick and think that you may have COVID-19. If you need emergency help, call 911.

For more information about COVID-19 and People with Chronic Medical Conditions see the CDC website [gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html)

For more information about private gatherings see [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).

These recommendations will continue to be updated. Please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov) for the most updated information.