



Stop the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 is easily spread from person-to-person through the droplets from sneezing or coughing from an infected person. If someone in your household is sick with COVID symptoms, it is important to take measures to prevent others in the household from getting sick.

Isolate and keep away from others

Being physically close to a person who is COVID positive increases the chances that others will get infected too. This risk increases the more time spent close to them. This is especially true when in poorly ventilated indoor spaces. But, isolating can be really hard, especially when living with other people or in smaller spaces. Here are some suggestions on how to isolate and keep away from others:

- Prepare a separate room or isolated space for the COVID positive person and keep them at a distance from others.
- As much as possible, they should stay in a room alone. Keep the room well ventilated and open windows frequently but keep the door closed.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible. Clean and disinfect bathroom surfaces immediately after use.
- Wear a medical mask if you are in the same room as the sick person.
- Do not allow visitors.
- Use separate dishes, cups, eating utensils, clothes, towels and bedding from the sick person.

Tell all close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19

A COVID positive person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. By letting close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect everyone.

Wash your hands regularly

You can catch germs (such as viruses and bacteria) when you touch contaminated objects or surfaces and then touch your face (mouth, eyes and nose). You can spread certain germs casually by touching another person. Washing your hands properly with soap and water can remove the germs from your hands and significantly reduce their spread. Soap kills the virus by bursting its protective bubble.



The key thing is to know **how to wash your hands**, so it works:

- wash your hands often
- use soap
- wash them all over for 20 seconds
- dry your hands well.

If you don't have access to soap and water, use hand sanitiser. Make sure it contains at least 60% alcohol and rub it into your hands for at least 20 seconds to ensure full coverage. Read more about [handwashing](#).

Cover coughs and sneezes

It is really important to cough or sneeze into your elbow. If your cough or sneeze is messy, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. Put the used tissue in a bin and wash your hands. COVID-19 is spread by droplets - if you don't cover your cough or sneeze, the large droplets spray out and may reach other people and surfaces. If you cough or sneeze into your elbow (rather than your hand) it keeps the virus off your hands, so you won't spread it onto things you touch. Read more about [how to cough and sneeze properly](#).

Use a tissue not a cloth handkerchief to blow your nose

Put any used tissues in a bin or a bag immediately. Then wash your hands thoroughly and dry them. This makes it less likely that the virus will stay on your hands after you have blown your nose.

Wear a mask or face covering

A face mask helps stop infectious droplets spreading when someone speaks, laughs, coughs or sneezes.

This includes someone who has COVID-19 but feels well or has no obvious symptoms.

It is best to use a medical-grade disposable face mask as long as it fits well and is worn correctly. Recent research has found that these can be washed and worn more than once. More information about how to do this and comparing the effectiveness of paper and fabric masks for stopping the spread of the virus can be found on the [face masks](#) page.

Keep surfaces clean

Catching COVID-19 from surfaces is the least common way of catching it, but it is still important to clean surfaces to reduce the risk. Regularly clean frequently used surfaces, such as phones, keyboards, door handles, remote controls, benches, tables, bathroom fixtures and toilets. Use a disinfectant that is antiviral and follow the instructions. Look for one that contains hypochlorite (which is the main active ingredient in bleach) or activated hydrogen peroxide (0.5%). You could also just use conventional bleach (at 0.1–0.2% available chlorine – check the back of your bottle) in water. You can also use ethanol alcohol or isopropyl alcohol.

