

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Care Instructions

Our family of physicians are here to provide exceptional care and protect the health and safety of all our patients and visitors.

OVERVIEW

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by a virus. It was first found in December 2019. It has since spread to other countries. It can cause fever, cough, and trouble breathing. In severe cases, it can cause pneumonia and make it hard to breathe without help.

This virus spreads person-to-person through droplets from coughing and sneezing. It may also spread by touching something that has the virus on it, such as a doorknob or a tabletop.

Symptoms include a cough, a fever, and shortness of breath. Most people only have milder symptoms or even none at all. People who are very sick are treated in a hospital.

The virus is diagnosed with a test that uses a swab of fluid from the nose or throat or sometimes uses sputum from the lungs. But even if you don't have a test, a doctor may tell you, after doing an exam and asking you questions, that you probably have been exposed to the virus.

There is no medicine to fight the virus. If you have mild symptoms, you can care for yourself at home. Treatment in the hospital for more serious cases includes support, such as help with breathing.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are at high risk of having been exposed to the virus, you must take steps to keep from spreading it to others. You will be told to isolate yourself for about 14 days, probably at home. Your doctor or another health professional will tell you when it's okay to come out of isolation.

You can find the latest information from these reliable sources:

- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).** Go to the CDC website at www.cdc.gov for updates about the disease and for ways to prevent the spread of infection.
- **World Health Organization (WHO).** Go to the WHO website at www.who.int for information about the virus, including updates on the outbreak and for travel advice.

Please be careful about accessing information on social media. We want to ensure your safety, and having updated and reliable information is key.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.

For any follow-up care or future appointments, refer to your doctor for guidance. Rescheduling an appointment may be the safest measure for you and your loved ones. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

HOW CAN YOU CARE FOR YOURSELF AT HOME?

- **Be safe with medicines.** Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- **Stay home.** Don't go to school, work, or public areas. And avoid using public transportation. Leave your home only if you need to get medical care. But call the doctor's office first so they know you're coming; they may instruct you to wear a mask upon arrival to the clinic.
- **If you are sick, please make every effort to reduce your contact with others.**
- **If you are sick, limit contact with people in your home.** If possible, stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom.
- **Wash your hand before and after contact with pets.**
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough** or sneeze or cough into your elbow to avoid coughing into the open air, especially if you are near to others. Then throw it in the trash right away.
- **Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze.** Use soap and water, and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **If you are sick, make sure household items are washed thoroughly.** These include bedding, towels, cups and glasses, and eating utensils.
- **Clean and disinfect areas of your home regularly.** Use household cleaners and disinfectant wipes or sprays. Take special care to clean things that you grab with your hands. These include doorknobs, remote controls, phones, and handles on your refrigerator and microwave. And don't forget countertops, tabletops, bathrooms, and computer keyboards.
- **Wait for your doctor or other health professional to tell you it's okay to leave isolation.** Call them when the time is up and let them know how you're feeling.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CALL FOR HELP?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example:

- If you have severe trouble breathing.
- You are extremely confused or not thinking clearly.
- You pass out or lose consciousness.
- If you have signs of severe dehydration, consult with a doctor.

If you have a high risk of having been exposed to this virus, or you have tested positive but don't have symptoms, call your doctor now if you develop symptoms such as:

- Shortness of breath.
- Fever.
- Cough.

If you have been diagnosed with coronavirus disease and already have a cough, fever, or shortness of breath, call your doctor now if your symptoms get worse or you don't get better as expected.

Whether you have symptoms or not, call ahead to the doctor's office before you go. If instructed to go to your doctor's office; they may instruct you to wear a mask upon arrival to the clinic.

CREDITS

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Southwestern Health Resources



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Are you concerned that you may have coronavirus?



Texas Health Resources Coronavirus Hotline, staffed by nurses, is available 24/7 to help answer your questions. Call 682-236-7601 anytime to speak with a nurse. Learn how to protect yourself.