

COVID-19: Getting Back into Your Community



Adults 65 and older and other high risk populations should take enhanced precautionary measures to mitigate the risks of contracting COVID-19.

Are You 65 or older or at a Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19?

According to the CDC, you may be at a higher risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19 if you belong to the following populations or have any of the following underlying medical conditions (especially if the condition is uncontrolled):

- Age 65 years and older.
- If you live in a nursing home or long term care facility.
- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
- People who have serious heart conditions.
- People who are immunocompromised (such as those who smoke, are taking cancer treatments, have had a bone marrow or organ transplantation, or have immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications).
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher).
- People with diabetes.
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.
- People with liver disease.

To learn more, please see CDC's guidance for those at [higher risk](#) and [people with disabilities](#).

COVID-19 Decision-Making

As the state gets ready to reopen, you may have a lot of questions, such as:

- When can I go back to my job?
- When can I visit my friends and family?
- When can I go to my favorite places to eat and shop again?
- When can I go back to doing things that I enjoy in the community like going to the movies, bowling, exercising, attending religious (faith based) services?
- How do I stay safe and best protect myself from COVID-19?
- What additional supports do I need to best protect myself from COVID-19 when I am in my community?

When thinking about these questions, it's important to make informed decisions and *do what's best for you!* Make sure to openly communicate with your healthcare provider, staff, family, service providers, and person centered care planning team as they can help you make informed decisions.

How Can I Prevent COVID-19?

According to the [CDC](#), there is a lot you can do to prevent COVID-19. You can also learn more by reading the [President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America](#).

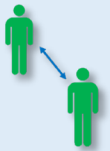
Wash Your Hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid Close Contact

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home as much as possible.
- Put distance between yourself and other people—remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
 - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at a higher risk of getting very sick.



Cover Your Mouth and Nose with a Cloth Face Cover When Around Others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, any one who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
 - Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.



Cover Coughs and Sneezes

- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Clean and Disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.



Did You Know?

When deciding if you are ready to get back out into the community, you have the right say, “I am not ready yet.” Or “this is what I think makes sense for me right now”.

You also have the right to ask for a change in services. If you need to make any changes to your services or Person Centered Care Plan (PCCP), please contact your regional PCCP team.

COVID-19 Considerations

As our communities begin to reopen, it’s important for everyone to have a game plan of how to get back to “normal”. The following questions can help you, and those who support you, to figure out your game plan.

Protecting My Health

Do I need physical assistance to wash my hands often and for at least 20 seconds?

Do I need assistance to get handwashing supplies and hand sanitizer to assist me?

Do I need physical assistance to wear a cloth face covering (mask, scarf, bandana)?

Do I need assistance to obtain cloth face coverings?

Do I need physical assistance to stay 6 feet from others including my friends and those who support me?

Do I need physical assistance to clean and disinfect my home?

Do I need assistance to obtain supplies to clean and disinfect my home?

Signs & Symptoms of COVID-19

Am I able to communicate to others how I am feeling for example really tired, headache, not feeling well?

Do I need physical assistance to take my temperature?

Do I need assistance to obtain the right type of thermometer for me?

Service Planning

Is my provider offering services at this time?

Will I be able to go out into my community?

Will I be able to go where I choose?

If I go to a day program, will I be able to go to all areas of the program?

Will I be able to sit close to my friends or staff?

Additional Considerations

What does my community currently look like regarding COVID-19 cases?

- The [Department of Health and Senior Services](#) provides daily updates regarding each counties reported cases and important information on this topic. COVID-19 case activity is updated daily.

Are others that I live with at a greater risk to get sick if I get exposed to COVID-19?

- If the answer is yes, further discussion and planning when making your decisions is important to decrease their possible risk of exposure. Things to consider may include:
 - What activities will I be participating in?
 - How many people will I be spending time with?
 - Will I need for others to come into my home to access services?
- If the service is necessary to support my health & safety what precautions do they need to follow to minimize risk of exposure?

Questions for Home and Community-Based Service Providers

Before accessing community services, here are some questions to ask your service provider.

General Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is everyone required to wear cloth face coverings when providing and receiving services?• Will cloth face coverings be provided to me by your agency?• Will I have to keep distance (6ft) from everyone when receiving the service-including my friends and support staff?• Will I be told if others receiving or providing the service with me have COVID-19?• Who do I tell if I think others receiving or providing the service with me are sick?• Will I be asked questions about my health? If so, how often?• How will my services be different?• Will the same people be receiving and providing services with me?• How will I be supported to wash my hands?• Will the provider supply soap and hand sanitizer?
In-Home Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will everyone in my home have to wear face coverings when staff come?• Do I need supplies for staff to practice handwashing in my home?• Can I ask about my staff's health when they arrive?
Day Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there rooms in the day program I cannot go in?• How is the building cleaned so it is a safe place for me?• Is there a place people can go when they get sick until they are picked-up?• How many people will be in the program with me?• How will the vehicles I ride in during my services be cleaned and how often?

To learn more about the state's plan to re-open, please see the Department of Health and Senior Services' [Economic Reopening Health Order](#).