

Preventative Measures

Errands and Going Out

CDC guidelines

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Deciding to Go Out

What you need to know

- In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- If you decide to engage in public activities, continue to protect yourself by practicing everyday preventive actions.
- Keep these items on hand when venturing out: a cloth face covering, tissues, and a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, if possible.

As communities and businesses are opening, you may be looking for ways to resume some daily activities as safely as possible. While there is no way to ensure zero risk of infection, it is important to understand potential risks and how to adopt different types of prevention measures to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a reminder, if you have COVID-19, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from other people.

Running Essential Errands

What you need to know

- Stay home if sick.
- Use online services when available.
- Wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Use social distancing (stay at least 6 feet away from others).
- Use hand sanitizer after leaving stores.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. So, think about:

- How many people will you interact with?
- Interacting with more people raises your risk.
- Being in a group with people who aren't social distancing or wearing cloth face coverings increases your risk.
- Engaging with new people (e.g., those who don't live with you) also raises your risk.
- Some people have the virus and don't have any symptoms, and it is not yet known how often people without symptoms can transmit the virus to others.
- Can you keep 6 feet of space between you and others? Will you be outdoors or indoors?
- The closer you are to other people who may be infected, the greater your risk of getting sick.
- Keeping distance from other people is especially important for people who have an increased risk for severe illness.
- Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor spaces where it might be harder to keep people apart and there's less ventilation.
- What's the length of time that you will be interacting with people?
- Spending more time with people who may be infected increases your risk of becoming infected.
- Spending more time with people increases their risk of becoming infected if there is any chance that you may already be infected.

What to consider before you go

Asking these questions can help determine your level of risk:

- Is COVID-19 spreading in my community?
- What are the local orders in my community?
- Will my activity put me in close contact with others?
- Am I at risk for severe illness?
- Do I live with someone who is at risk for severe illness?
- Do I practice everyday preventive actions?
- Will I have to share any items, equipment, or tools with other people?
- Will I need to take public transportation to get to the activity?
- Does my activity require travel to another community?
- If I get sick with COVID-19, will I have to miss work or school?
- Do I know what to do if I get sick?

Shopping

Order online or use curbside pickup

- Order food and other items online for home delivery or curbside pickup (if possible).
- Only visit the grocery store, or other stores selling household essentials, in person when you absolutely need to. This will limit your potential exposure to others and the virus that causes COVID-19.

Protect yourself while shopping

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
- When you do have to visit in person, go during hours when fewer people will be there (for example, early morning or late night).
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness, find out if the store has special hours for people at higher risk. If they do, try to shop during those hours.
- Disinfect the shopping cart, use disinfecting wipes if available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If possible, use touchless payment (pay without touching money, a card, or a keypad). If you must handle money, a card, or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer right after paying.

Use hand sanitizer

- After leaving the store, use hand sanitizer.

Wash hands at home

- When you get home, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Follow food safety guidelines: clean, separate, cook, chill. There is no evidence that food or food packaging play a significant role in spreading the virus in the United States.

Deliveries & Takeout

Limit in person contact if possible

- Pay online or on the phone when you order (if possible).
- Accept deliveries without in-person contact whenever possible. Ask for deliveries to be left in a safe spot outside your house (such as your front porch or lobby), with no person-to-person interaction. Otherwise, stay at least 6 feet away from the delivery person.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after accepting deliveries or collecting mail

- After receiving your delivery or bringing home your takeout food, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- After collecting mail from a post office or home mailbox, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Banking

Bank online whenever possible

- Ask about options for telephone or virtual meetings to use banking services.
- Use drive-thru banking services, automated teller machines (ATM), or mobile banking apps for routine transactions that do not require face-to-face assistance as much as possible.
- Look for any extra prevention practices being implemented by the bank, such as plexiglass barriers for tellers or bankers, staff wearing cloth face coverings, or physical distancing signs in the lobby.
- Wear a cloth face covering when doing any in-person exchanges and unable to stay at least 6 feet apart from other people – and make sure that bank employees and other people inside the bank are also wearing cloth face coverings.
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol after any deposit, withdrawal, exchange, drive-thru visit, or use of an ATM.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when you arrive home or to your destination where a restroom is available.

Getting Gas

Use disinfecting wipes on handles or buttons

- Use disinfecting wipes on handles and buttons before you touch them (if available).
- After fueling, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home or somewhere with soap and water.

Doctor Visits and Getting Medicines

Talk to your doctor online, by phone, or e-mail

- Use telemedicine, if available, or communicate with your doctor or nurse by phone or e-mail.
- Talk to your doctor about rescheduling procedures that are not urgently needed.

If you must visit in-person, protect yourself and others

- If you think you have COVID-19, notify the doctor or healthcare provider before your visit and follow their instructions.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while inside and in lines.
- When paying, use touchless payment methods if possible. If you cannot use touchless payment, sanitize your hands after paying with card, cash, or check. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

Limit in-person visits to the pharmacy

- Plan to order and pick up all your prescriptions at the same time.
- If possible, call prescription orders in ahead of time. Use drive-thru windows, curbside services (wait in your car until the prescription is ready), mail-order, or other delivery services. Do the same for pet medicine.
- Check with your doctor and pharmacist to see if you can get a larger supply of your medicines so you do not have to visit the pharmacy as often.

Dining at a restaurant

Check the restaurant's COVID-19 prevention practices before you go

- Check the restaurant's website and social media to see if they have updated their information to address any COVID-19 safety guidelines.
- Before you go to the restaurant, call and ask if all staff are wearing cloth face coverings while at work.
- Ask about options for self-parking to remove the need for a valet service.

Take steps to protect yourself at the restaurant

- Wear cloth face coverings when less than 6 feet apart from other people or indoors.
- Take precautions – like wearing a cloth face covering as much as possible when not eating and maintaining a proper social distance if you are dining with others who don't live with you.
- Maintain a social distance of 6 feet or more in any entryway, hallway, or waiting area.
- When possible, sit outside at tables spaced at least 6 feet apart from other people.
- When possible, choose food and drink options that are not self-serve to limit the use of shared serving utensils, handles, buttons, or touchscreens.

Clean hands

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when entering and exiting the restaurant. 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 rub them together until they feel dry.
- Before using the restroom, make sure there is adequate soap and paper towels or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Going to a nail salon

Prepare for your appointment

- Book services in advance to remove the need for waiting in a lobby with other people. If you must wait, maintain social distance.
- Before you go, call and ask if all staff are wearing cloth face coverings at work and if there are physical barriers to minimize risk of transmission (e.g., plexiglass barriers).
- If offered by the salon, wait in your car or outside until you can be contacted by mobile phone when it is your turn to be seen for an appointment.

Wear a cloth face covering

- Wear a cloth face covering at all times when inside the salon.

Wash hands often and limit contact with common surfaces or items

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer immediately before receiving your service and after touching any common surfaces like curing lamps, countertops, doorknobs, toilets, tables, light switches, phones, faucets, sinks, and keyboards.
- Use cashless payment options when possible. If not available, ensure that cash and cards are handled with care by employees either by changing gloves between each transaction or with use of hand sanitizer between clients.
- Look for no-touch waste baskets at the cash registers and in the restrooms.

Using Pools/Water Parks

Before you go

- Stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19, have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for COVID-19 test results, or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Check to see if the public swim area, pool, water playground, or hot tub has steps in place to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Bring supplies that help you and others stay healthy—for example, a cloth face covering (or two, for each person, in case one gets wet), hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfectant wipes, tissues, and paper towels.

Use social distancing in and out of the water

- Whether you're in or out of the water, stay at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.
- Avoid crowded swim areas, beaches, pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs where you cannot stay 6 feet away from others.
- Wear a cloth face covering
- a young girl in a swimsuit wearing a cloth face cover on a beach

Wear cloth face coverings when you are not in the water

- Wear cloth face coverings when you are not in the water.
- Do not place a cloth face covering on children younger than 2 years of age or on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without help.
- Face coverings are especially important when physical distancing is hard.

Wash hands often and avoid sharing items

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating or drinking and when you arrive and leave the swim area. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and rub until your hands are dry.
- Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy, so wipe sand or dirt off before applying it.
- Avoid sharing items, such as food, equipment, toys, and supplies, with people who don't live with you.
- If you are not wearing your cloth face covering, make sure to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or inside of your elbow, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash your hands immediately, or if soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

Check out more information on how to protect yourself and others. Know the symptoms of COVID-19, and contact your health care provider if you develop symptoms.

Swimming does carry some health and safety risks. Visit CDC's Healthy Swimming website for information to help you prevent illness and drowning, so you can safely enjoy the fun and health benefits of swimming.

Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities

Visit parks that are close to your home

Traveling long distances to visit a park may contribute to the spread of COVID-19, as:

- Travel may require you to stop along the way or be in close contact with others with whom you may not otherwise have contact.
- Travel may also expose you to surfaces contaminated with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Stay at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with ("social distancing") and take other steps to prevent COVID-19.

- When visiting parks and recreational facilities open for public use, try to protect against COVID-19, by practicing social distancing and everyday steps such as washing hands often and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Follow these actions when visiting a park or recreational facility:
- Stay at least 6 feet from others at all times. This might make some open areas, trails, and paths better to use than others. Do not go into a crowded area.
- Avoid gathering with people you don't live with.
- Wear a cloth face covering as feasible. Face coverings are most essential in times when social distancing is difficult. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, can't move, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Adults and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer: Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub hands together until dry, if soap and water are not readily available.

Carefully consider use of playgrounds, and help children follow guidelines.

In communities where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19, playgrounds can be hard to keep safe because:

- They are often crowded and could make social distancing difficult;
- It can be difficult to keep surfaces clean and disinfected;
- COVID-19, can spread when young children touch contaminated objects, and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

Monitor Your Health Daily

Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.

Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

Take your temperature if symptoms develop.

Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.

Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.