

## About coronavirus (COVID-19)



### FAST FACTS:

- COVID-19 is a new infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- The key symptoms of COVID-19 are a fever, dry cough, tiredness and loss of taste or smell.
- COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Some people do not have any symptoms and may not even know they have the virus, while others get seriously ill and need hospital care.
- Physical distancing, wearing a face mask around other people and frequent handwashing are some of the best ways to prevent COVID-19.
- COVID-19 vaccines are now being made available in some areas. These will prevent you from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.
- If you think you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home and call your local health authority. They will tell you what to do next.

*This page is updated regularly, make sure you come back for the latest information.*

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19, otherwise known as coronavirus disease 2019, is a new infectious disease caused by a previously unknown virus called SARS-CoV-2.

# What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

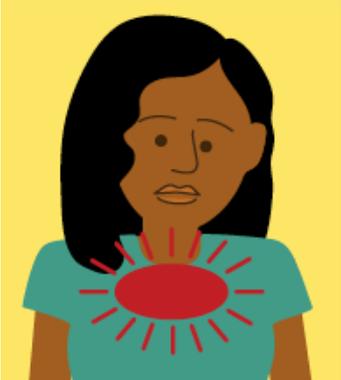
- fever,
- dry cough,
- tiredness,
- loss of taste or smell.

Other symptoms include: nasal congestion, conjunctivitis (red eyes), sore throat, headache, muscle or joint pain, skin rash, nausea or vomiting, diarrhoea, chills or dizziness.

Some people get more seriously ill with COVID-19 and may have symptoms such as shortness of breath, loss of speech or mobility, confusion, chest pain or a high temperature. These people will need medical care. In critical cases, COVID-19 can lead to death.

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Some people do not have any symptoms and may not even know they have the virus. You can still pass COVID-19 on even if you aren't showing any symptoms, so it's important to always follow the prevention advice.

### What are the main symptoms of COVID-19?

			
Fever, where your chest or back feels hot.	A dry and continuous cough.	Tiredness.	Loss of taste or smell.

 If you have difficulty breathing or chest pain call for urgent medical care.

 Remember, not everyone who has coronavirus gets symptoms. Follow your government's advice to stop the spread of the virus.

## Who is most at-risk from COVID-19?

Anyone can get COVID-19 and become seriously ill. However, people over 60 years old and those with underlying health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart or lung problems, diabetes or cancer are at a higher risk of developing serious illness.

Current evidence suggests people living with HIV have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, however, this is lower than for some other health conditions. The best way to stay healthy is to continue to take your treatment as prescribed and follow the prevention advice for COVID-19.

People living with HIV who have a compromised immune system – those with a low CD4 count, a high viral load or recent opportunistic infection – appear to be at a greater risk. [See our page on COVID-19 and living with HIV.](#)

## How is COVID-19 passed on?

COVID-19 is passed on through respiratory droplets. These are tiny droplets that come from your nose and mouth when you sneeze, cough, breathe, speak or sing.

COVID-19 is normally passed on through close contact with someone who currently has the virus. When you are in close contact, you are likely to breathe in the respiratory droplets from their mouth and nose, which can contain the virus.

There's a greater risk of getting COVID-19 in places where people are closer together and spend more time together. This includes indoor, crowded and poorly ventilated spaces, such as restaurants, gyms, nightclubs, offices and places of worship.

Respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes can also land on surfaces. The virus is then spread when another person comes into contact with these droplets and touches their own eyes, nose or mouth, without washing their hands first.

### What is COVID-19 and how is it passed on?

**COVID-19** is a new infectious disease that affects your lungs and airways.  
It's caused by a virus that's spread in droplets from the mouth and nose when you cough, breathe, speak or sing.

**You can get the virus by:**

- 1.** Having close contact with someone with COVID-19 and breathing in droplets exhaled by them.
- 2.** Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your face.

# How can I prevent COVID-19?

The best ways to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 are:

1. Staying at least one metre away from people as much as possible, and even greater distance when you are indoors.
2. Wearing a face mask when you are around others.

There are two types of face masks, fabric masks (which you can make yourself and are suitable for most people) and medical masks.

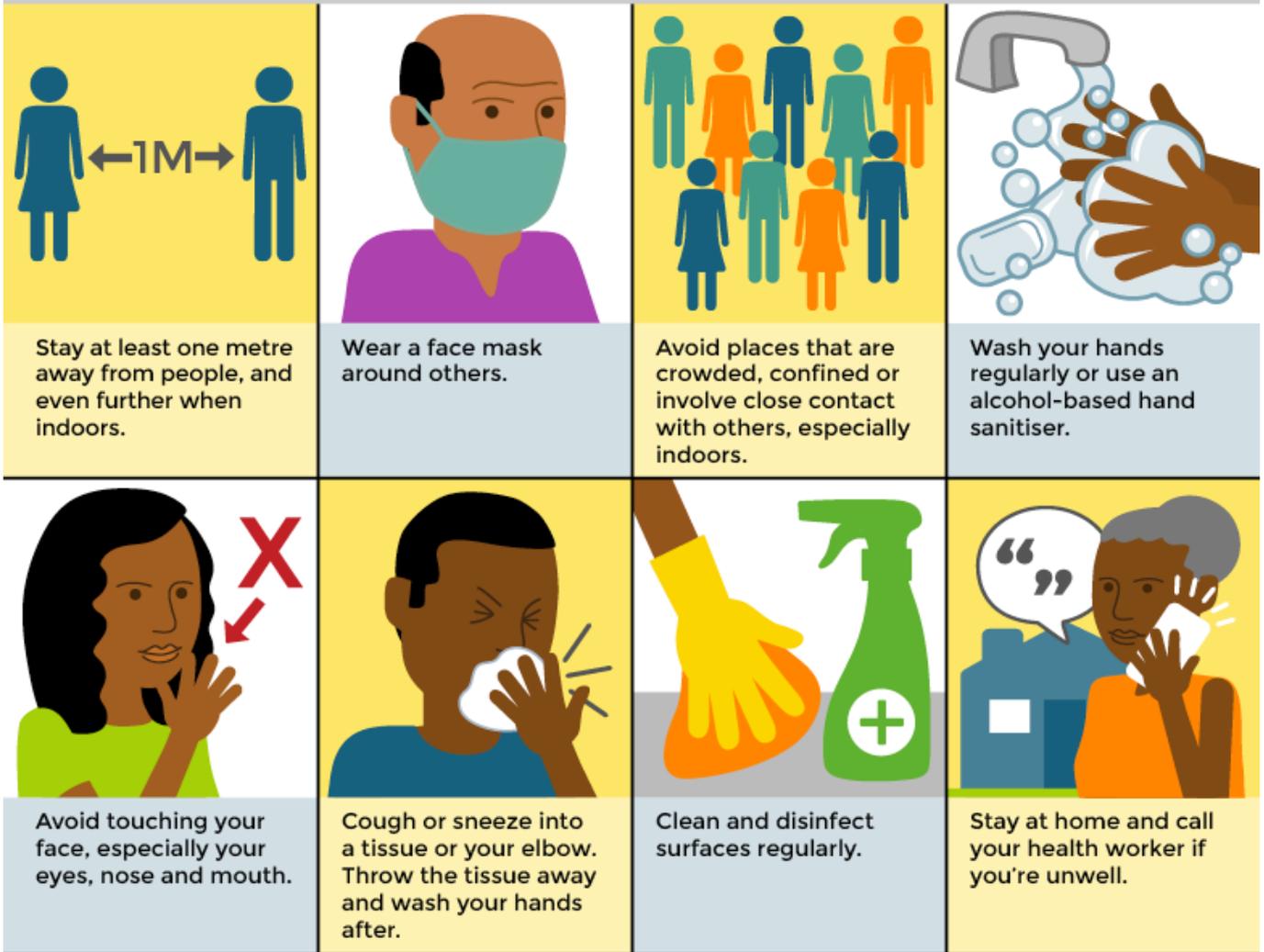
As medical masks are in short supply, they should only be worn by healthcare workers, people with COVID-19 symptoms and those caring for people with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. When it's not possible to maintain a distance of one meter from others, people over 60 and those with underlying health conditions should also wear medical masks.

Both fabric and medical-grade face masks are only effective when used correctly and alongside other prevention measures. For more information on wearing masks, see our [FAQs](#).

There are several other measures you can take to prevent COVID-19 being passed on.

- Avoid places that are crowded, confined or involve close contact with others, especially indoors.
- Wash your hands regularly and properly using soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if you do not have access to water or soap.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a clean tissue when you sneeze or cough. Throw the tissue away and wash your hands after. If you don't have a tissue, cover your face with the inside of your elbow.
- Only meet people who are not part of your household outdoors, if local restrictions allow – outdoor gatherings are safer than indoor ones.
- Keep indoor spaces well ventilated when you are inside with other people. You can do this by opening windows and doors to let fresh air in.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces regularly.
- Get a COVID-19 vaccine when you are offered it.

## How can I prevent COVID-19?



## What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

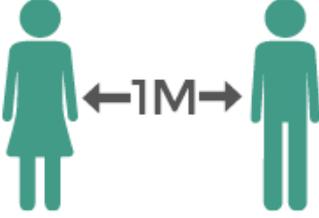
You will need to stay at home and self-isolate if you have symptoms of COVID-19 - even if they are mild. Call your local health authority for advice. Don't visit the clinic, as you could pass the virus onto others.

Do not leave your home for any reason during this time, including to go to work or school. Ask friends or neighbours to bring you any supplies you need. They should leave these outside and not enter your home. The people you live with should also stay home for at least 14 days from when you first noticed symptoms to prevent the virus from being passed on.

If you have difficulty breathing, persistent pain in your chest or loss of speech or mobility, or confusion call your health provider immediately.

Most people with COVID-19 recover from the virus without the need for hospital treatment.

## What should I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?

			
Stay at home and call your local health service. <b>Don't</b> visit a clinic.	They will tell you if you need to take a COVID-19 test and how to do it.	The people you live with also need to stay home for at least 14 days from when your symptoms started.	Avoid close contact with others in your household. Try to stay <b>at least</b> one metre away.
			
If you live with someone more vulnerable try to arrange for them to stay elsewhere.	Ask friends or neighbours to leave supplies outside your house.	Mild symptoms can be managed with resting, drinking liquids and paracetamol.	If your symptoms don't improve, or you have difficulty breathing or chest pain call your local health service.

**Avert** [www.avert.org/coronavirus](http://www.avert.org/coronavirus)

Source: WHO

## Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

Several COVID-19 vaccines are being rolled out in some countries. Follow the official advice in your area to find out when the vaccine will be available to you.

COVID-19 vaccines work by helping our bodies develop immunity to coronavirus, the virus that causes COVID-19. This means that if you are exposed to the virus, your body will be ready to respond to it and you will be less likely to get seriously ill.

All COVID-19 vaccines currently in use have been proven safe and effective through rigorous clinical trials.

Evidence shows the current vaccines are effective at protecting people from getting sick from COVID-19, however we are still learning about how well they stop the transmission of the virus. That's why even after having the vaccine, it's important to follow prevention measures such as social distancing and wearing a mask.

[Find out more about COVID-19 on our FAQs page.](#)

# HELP US HELP OTHERS

Avert.org is helping to prevent the spread of HIV and improve sexual health by giving people trusted, up-to date information.

We provide all this for FREE, but it takes time and money to keep Avert.org going.

Can you support us and protect our future?

Every contribution helps, no matter how small.

[PLEASE DONATE NOW](#)



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