

HELPFUL COVID-19 GUIDE

Below are some helpful guidelines to help insure your safety:

How to Protect Yourself & Others

Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 illness. More information on [Are you at higher risk for serious illness?](#)

head side cough icon

Know how it spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - o Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - o Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - o These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - o Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Everyone Should:

Wash your hands often

- 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 rub 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
- Put distance between yourself and other people.
- o Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.

o Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at 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.
- o Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone 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 external icon will work.

The above information was taken from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

1. Pay attention to personal hygiene. Yes, we know you've heard all this a million times already. It

bears repeating. There are a lot of things we don't know about this virus, but we do know it spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Other individuals may be infected when they touch a surface that has virus particles on it and then touch their own mouth, nose, or eyes. Hand hygiene is the very best weapon in any fight between human and contagious disease.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Don't touch your face. This is a lot harder than it sounds and requires conscious effort. The average person touches their face 23 times an hour, and about half of the time, they're touching their mouth, eyes, or nose — the mucosal surfaces that COVID-19 infects.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow or upper arm.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick and seek appropriate medical guidance.

2. Keep surfaces clean. Among the things we don't know about COVID-19 is how long the virus can survive outside of a human host. But we do know that the virus is susceptible to disinfectants. Here are some cleaning tips:

Use the right product. According to the CDC, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective against the COVID-19 virus. See the CDC's environmental cleaning and disinfection recommendations and this list of EPA-registered disinfectants.

Use the product right. First, clean dirt off of the surface. Then wipe the surface with disinfectant. Leave the surface wet with disinfectant for as many minutes as the product instructions require. This is a vital step that people often miss. It's not enough to just wipe the surface and go.

Clean the right surfaces.

High-touch areas such as door handles, phones, remote controls, light switches, and bathroom fixtures.

Horizontal surfaces such as countertops, kitchen tables, desktops and other places where respiratory droplets could land.

AND your mobile phone! It's filthy. Did you wash your hands and then touch that phone? Just like that, you're re-contaminated.

- Do not reuse disinfectant wipes on multiple surfaces. This can transfer germs from the used wipe to other surfaces. Use one wipe for each surface and then throw it out.
- Do not dry surfaces after wiping them down. Surfaces you are disinfecting need to stay wet for the amount of time listed on the label. The contact time with the disinfectant is what actually kills the germs.

3. Practice “social distancing.” Social distancing is exactly what it sounds like: keeping your distance from other people. It’s often used to describe public health measures imposed by local governments — measures like quarantining the sick, closing schools, and canceling public gatherings. And, when it’s done early enough during a pandemic illness, it’s been shown to save lives. But you don’t have to wait for the government to tell you what to do; here’s what you can do now:

- Keep your distance. The number of people in any given location is important, but density is even more important. Respiratory droplets from a cough or sneeze can travel up to six feet and be inhaled into the lungs of people within range. Protect yourself by staying out of range.
- Make your meetings virtual. Or postpone meetings entirely.
- Don’t hug or shake hands. If you have to meet with someone in person, find an alternative greeting; research has shown that fist bumps —and even high fives — dramatically reduce the transfer of bacteria during greeting exchange. But feel free to experiment with other options as well. Tip your hat, wave, or offer a friendly and welcoming squirt of hand sanitizer.
- Make a conscious effort to avoid crowds. For example, with warmer weather upon us, think about walking or riding a bike to campus instead of taking the subway or a bus. This recommendation relates both to keeping your distance and avoiding contaminated surfaces, because the more people, the more those common surfaces get touched.

**The above information was taken from: <https://medical.mit.edu/three-ways-to-protect>