Checklist for Older Adults

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. Public health officials might recommend steps you and others in your community can take to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce its impact.

If you are an **older adult**[1], you are at higher risk for serious COVID-19 illness. It is very important for you to take the following steps to stay healthy.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Listen to your local news to stay informed and up to date about COVID-19 in your community.

Take **everyday actions**[2] during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect yourself and others:

☐ **Stay home** as much as possible.

☐ **Avoid close contact with people who are sick,** even inside your home.

☐ **Avoid all cruise ships and unnecessary air travel.**

☐ *Cover coughs and sneezes*[3] with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Then wash your hands.

☐ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

☐ *Clean your hands often*[4], especially when you must leave your home.

　» Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

　» If you don't have soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

☐ *Clean and disinfect surfaces*[5] and things you touch often, such as tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, elevator buttons, handrails, countertops, remote controls, shared electronic equipment, shared exercise equipment, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. Use a *disinfectant that is effective against the virus that causes COVID-19*[6].

☐ **Pay attention to your local news and follow the steps from your local health officials.**

☐ If you have caregivers, ask them to check their temperature daily and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. If they have symptoms, ask them to not come to your home and to notify you if they develop a fever or have *other symptoms of COVID-19*[7].

cdc.gov/coronavirus

GET READY IN CASE YOU GET COVID-19

Make a plan for if you get sick:
https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/caregivers-month.html

☐ **Know how to stay in touch with others by phone or email.** You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, and community health workers if you become sick.

☐ **Determine who can care for you** if you have a caregiver who gets sick.

☐ **Ask your healthcare provider about obtaining extra medications** to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a while.

☐ If you cannot get extra medications, consider using **mail-order for your medications.**

☐ **Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies** (masks, thermometer, tissues, etc.) to treat your symptoms and monitor yourself for signs of severe illness. Talk to your healthcare provider about any other medical supplies you may need to keep in your home.

☐ **Have at least a two-week supply of household items and groceries** on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home.

☐ **Consider ways of getting medications, food, and mail brought to your house** by family, friends, or businesses.

☐ **Have a plan for someone to care for your dependents and** *pets*[8] if you get sick.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK WITH COVID-19

Stay home except to get medical care:

☐ **Stay home.** Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care.

» Do not leave your home, except to get medical care.

» Do not visit public areas.

» Stay at least 6 feet away from other household members, especially if they are elderly or have underlying medical conditions that might put them at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness.

☐ **Take care of yourself.** Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.

☐ **Wear a** *cloth face covering*[8] **over your nose and mouth** if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home). Avoid touching the front of the face covering when you are wearing it, and wash your hands before putting the cloth face covering on and after you remove it. Cloth face coverings should not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

☐ **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call your doctor before you get medical care.

☐ **Avoid public transportation,** ridesharing, or taxis unless it is necessary to seek medical care.

☐ **Monitor your symptoms.**

» **Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath** but you could have other symptoms, too.

» Other symptoms might include **chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.**

- ☐ **Trouble breathing** is a more serious symptom that means you should **call 911 or go to the emergency department right away.**

- ☐ **Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department.** Your local health authorities may give you instructions on how to check your symptoms and report information to them.

WHEN TO SEEK EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION:

Look for **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19. If you have any of these signs, **call 911 or go to the emergency room right away. Do not delay.** Emergency departments have measures in place to keep you safe if you need emergency care.

- ☐ **Trouble breathing**

- ☐ **Persistent pain or pressure in the chest**

- ☐ **New or worsening confusion**

- ☐ **Inability to wake or stay awake**

- ☐ **Bluish lips or face**

* This list does not include all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care and may have COVID-19.

STRESS AND COPING

You may feel increased stress during this pandemic. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Learn about *stress and coping*[10].

- ☐ If you are feeling overwhelmed, unsafe, or need immediate help, you can call:

  - » 911

  - » *Disaster Distress Helpline*: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
    https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness

  - » *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline*: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or *Lifeline Crisis Chat*
    http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
    http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx

  - » *National Domestic Violence Hotline*: 1-800-799-7233
    https://www.thehotline.org/

  - » *Veteran's Crisis Line:* 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
    https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/

- ☐ You can also find a healthcare provider or treatment:

  - » *SAMHSA's National Helpline*: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for mental and/or substance use disorders
    https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline

  - » *Treatment Services Locator Website* for mental and/or substance use disorders
    https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/

DEVELOP A CARE PLAN

A *care plan*[11] summarizes your health conditions, medications, healthcare providers, emergency contacts, and end-of-life care options (for example, advance directives). When you develop your care plan, talk with your doctor and, if needed, ask for help from a family member or home nurse aide.

A care plan can benefit you beyond the current pandemic. You can update your care plan every year or any time you have a change in your health or medications. Having a care plan can help you avoid emergency room visits and hospitalizations, better manage your medical care, and improve your quality of life.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, having a care plan is an important part of emergency preparedness.

> » *Guidance on how to develop your emergency preparedness care plan*
> https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/caregivers-month.html

> » *Download a fillable care plan form*
> https://www.cdc.gov/aging/caregiving/pdf/Complete-Care-Plan-Form-508.pdf

> » *Serious Illness Care Program COVID-19 Response Toolkit*
> https://covid19.ariadnelabs.org/2020/04/15/serious-illness-care-program-covid-19-response-toolkit/

REFERENCES

1. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html

2. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

3. https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

4. https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

5. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

6. https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

7. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

8. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/pets.html

9. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

10. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html

11. https://www.cdc.gov/aging/develop-care-plan.html