What to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19 and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19

If you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath but have not been around anyone with diagnosed COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent your infection from spreading to people in your home and community.

Could I have COVID-19?
The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell. If you have these symptoms, even if you have not been around anyone with COVID-19, you may have COVID-19 or another respiratory virus. COVID-19 is circulating in many communities in Illinois but other respiratory viruses may be circulating in your community as well.

Should I get tested for COVID-19?
Currently, anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 is encouraged to be tested.

If you are over the age of 60 years, are pregnant, or have medical conditions (like cancer, immunosuppression, heart, lung, or kidney disease, and diabetes) you may be at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. Call your physician’s office and ask if you need to be evaluated. They may want monitor your health more closely.

If you do not have a high-risk condition and your symptoms are mild, you can call your healthcare provider to help you decide if you need to be further evaluated. If you think you are having symptoms related to COVID-19, you can also contact a free remote health monitoring program for additional guidance.

How can I get tested for COVID-19?
There are testing locations listed on the IDPH website with information and requirements for testing at each site. You can find this information at [http://dph.illinois.gov/testing](http://dph.illinois.gov/testing). Please note that the IDPH COVID-19 hotline does not assist residents with getting tested and does not make decisions about who should be tested.

What should I do to keep my respiratory infection from spreading to my family and other people in the community?
Because we are trying to stop the spread of respiratory illnesses, we ask that you take the following steps to help protect people in your home and your community:

**Stay home except to get medical care**

- You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home. As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Do not handle pets or other animals while sick or if COVID-19 positive. See [COVID-19 and Animals](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/animals/animals.html) for more information.

**Call ahead before visiting your doctor**
If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have symptoms that are
consistent with COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider’s office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

**Wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth**

You should wear a **cloth face covering**, over your nose and mouth if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home). You may need to make a cloth face covering using a scarf or bandana. You don’t need to wear the cloth face covering if you are alone. If you can’t put on a cloth face covering (because of trouble breathing, for example), cover your coughs and sneezes in some other way. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from other people. This will help protect the people around you. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2 years, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is not able to remove the covering without help.

**Cover your coughs and sneezes**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty.

**Avoid sharing personal household items**

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

**Clean your hands often**

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

**Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day**

High touch surfaces include counters, tablespops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

**Monitor your symptoms**

**Call your health care provider if you have:**

- Fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other flu-like symptoms that are not better or are worsening after 24-48 hours.
- Mild symptoms and are an older adult or have any of the chronic health conditions listed previously

Before seeking in-person care, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms. Put on a facemask before you enter any health care facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting your infection.

If you experience any of the following warning signs, seek immediate medical care:
- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

**Discontinuing home isolation**

If you have fever, cough or other symptoms of COVID-19, even if you have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should stay home away from others until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
  AND
- other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
  AND
- at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared