



COVID-19: Safety and Health Guidance for Non-Health Care Workers Working for NYC Government

This guidance is intended for non-health care workers working for NYC government. It may be modified as other available information and/or guidance warrants.

COVID-19

For general information on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), including how to guard against stigma, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus or cdc.gov/covid19. For real-time updates, text "COVID" to 692-692. Message and data rates may apply.

General Infection Prevention Strategies

City agency staff should routinely employ infection prevention strategies to reduce transmission of COVID-19.

- Monitor your health daily and before each shift and **stay home if you are sick**.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead, wave.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath and other symptoms of COVID-19. See www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-symptoms-chronic-health-risks.page.
- Create at least 6 feet of space between yourself and others whenever possible. This is called social or physical distancing.

We strongly encourage you to use these infection prevention strategies routinely, especially washing your hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.

Face Coverings for Non-Health Care Workers

All New Yorkers must wear a face covering when outside their home if they cannot maintain physical distance from others. Essential workers must wear a face covering at work when they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others. A face covering is any well-secured paper or cloth (like a bandana or scarf) that covers your mouth and nose. Employers must provide face coverings to employees at the employers' expense. See Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 202.16, available at governor.ny.gov/executiveorders. For more information, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus and look for "FAQ About Face Coverings."

Some staff may be required to use either a face mask or an N95 respirator depending on the type of job activity or per their organization's protocol and for reasons unrelated to the current COVID-19 outbreak. If so, such staff should use face masks or N95 respirators as usual.

Face masks and N95 respirators are in very short supply and health care providers need these masks to stay healthy and to care for the most critically ill. As such, only staff who are required to use these masks should do so.

Cleaning of Public/Common Areas in Non-Health Care Facilities

If work activities require cleaning of lobbies and other common areas in public spaces and there is concern over COVID-19, more frequent cleaning of "high-touch" areas can help support infection control measures. For information, please visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) and look for "General Cleaning/Disinfection Guidance for Non-Health Care Settings" under the "Businesses and Other Facilities" section.

If Staff Feel Sick

- **If you have mild to moderate symptoms, stay home.** By staying home, you reduce the possibility of transmission to others, including health care workers who are needed to care for the more seriously ill.
- If you are 50 years of age or older or have health conditions (such as lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, liver disease, cancer or a weakened immune system), consult your health care provider. They may want to monitor you more closely.
- If your symptoms do not go away or get worse after three to four days, consult with your provider.
- If contacting your provider, call, text or use your patient portal before visiting your provider. Use telemedicine instead of an in-person medical visit, if possible.
- If you need to leave home:
 - Make sure to keep a minimum of 6 feet from others — distance is the best way to protect others.
 - Wear a face covering to cover your mouth and nose.
 - Wash your hands before going out, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer while outside your home, and cover your nose and mouth with your arm or a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoid other people as much as possible — walk if you can and do not enter crowded stores or transportation.

Self-Monitor

Self-monitoring means you check yourself for fever and remain alert for cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and other symptoms of COVID-19. It is important that people who have symptoms not attend work and only leave home for essential medical care or to get basic needs, like groceries.

Most illness caused by coronavirus is mild. If you think you have COVID-19 and your illness is mild, you do not need to see your doctor and you **do not** need to get tested. This is because getting tested will not change how your doctor will take care of you. If you do not feel better in three to four days, consult with your provider.

It is important that you monitor your health and know when to seek emergency medical care for COVID-19 and other health problems. You may be worried about going to a hospital or doctor's office when many people are getting care for COVID-19. However, if you have any of the following symptoms, go to an emergency room or **call 911** immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- New confusion or inability to stay awake
- Blue lips or face
- Difficulty speaking
- Sudden face drooping
- Numbness in the face, arm or leg
- Seizure
- Any sudden and severe pain
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea

This is not a complete list. For any kind of medical emergency, call **911** immediately. If your symptoms are serious, but not an emergency, call your health care provider right away. Many providers can help you over the phone or through telemedicine visits. If you need a health care provider, call 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692) or **311**. You can get care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

Mental Health

An infectious disease outbreak such as COVID-19 can be stressful for you, your loved ones and your friends. It is natural to feel overwhelmed, sad, anxious and afraid, or to experience other symptoms of distress, such as trouble sleeping. To lower your stress and manage the situation:

- Try to stay positive
- Remind yourself of your strengths
- Stay connected with friends and loved ones
- Use healthy coping skills

You can visit nyc.gov/nycwell and click on their [App Library](#) to find apps and online tools to help you manage your health and emotional well-being from home.

If symptoms of stress become overwhelming for you, you can connect with trained counselors at NYC Well, a free and confidential mental health support service that can help New Yorkers cope. NYC Well staff are available 24/7 and can provide brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages. For support, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat online by visiting nyc.gov/nycwell.

New York State's COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline is also available and staffed with specially trained volunteer professionals. They are there to listen, support and offer referrals from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week at 844-863-9314.

If you are thinking about harming yourself or someone else, contact NYC Well or call **911** immediately.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

5.1.20