



## **Guidance for People Who May Have an Increased Risk for Severe Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

### **About Novel Coronavirus**

#### **What is a novel coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that are common throughout the world. They cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious illnesses like pneumonia. A novel coronavirus is a type of coronavirus that has not been previously seen in humans. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been detected in thousands of people worldwide.

#### **How serious is this virus and what are the range of symptoms?**

Most people with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms. Symptoms can include fever, cough or shortness of breath.

#### **Who is at higher risk for severe illness?**

People who are older or may have underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease, appear to have a higher risk of severe COVID-19. Children and young adults appear to be less affected.

### **What You Need to Know to Stay Healthy**

#### **What steps can I take to avoid getting COVID-19?**

If you think you may have an increased risk for severe COVID-19, take the following steps to prepare and prevent getting infected:

- Avoid close contact with people who 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 coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not with your hands.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Stop shaking hands when you greet someone. Consider only using an elbow bump when greeting someone.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or disinfecting wipes.
- Encourage your household members and care providers to follow these healthy hygiene tips.
- Avoid nonessential travel to affected areas. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers) for the latest travel health notices.
- Make a list of medications you take regularly. Ask your health care provider if you can have a 90-day supply of all necessary medications.
- If you require home care, ask your provider about plans for what will be done if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community. Plans should include how to provide care without interruptions.



- Ask your provider if you should have influenza or pneumococcal vaccines.
- If your primary doctor has an online “patient portal,” become familiar with using it, in case the practice is very busy during an outbreak.
- Create an emergency contact list.
- Identify people or social groups who can assist if you need extra help.
- Consider stocking up on extra food and important household supplies.
- Take steps to prevent social isolation, in case physical travel is restricted during an outbreak. Consider connecting with others using video chat applications like Skype or FaceTime.

### **What should I do if I become ill while COVID-19 is in my community?**

- Call your regular health care provider for guidance. Do not go to a clinic or hospital without calling ahead. New York City residents without a health care provider or insurance can call NYC Health + Hospitals at 844-NYC-4NYC.
- Seek medical attention promptly if your illness is worsening (e.g., you develop difficulty breathing). You should still call ahead, so that providers may prepare for your arrival.

### **Helpful Resources**

- If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, you can report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311**.
- If you are experiencing stress or feel anxious, contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text WELL to 65173. NYC Well is a confidential help line that is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can provide brief supportive therapy, crisis counseling, and connections to behavioral health treatment, in more than 200 languages.
- If you need help with other support services, contact the NYC Department for the Aging’s Aging Connect at 212-AGING-NYC or 212-244-6469 to speak with an aging specialist.