WHAT TO DO

IF YOU HAVE COVID

A guide for preparing for illness, preventing spread, managing symptoms, & recovery

The People’s CDC has reviewed up-to-date research to create evidence-based guidelines and recommendations for what to do if you have COVID. This one page document is meant to serve as a simplified and printable guide. For more detailed information, please visit our full resource guide at peoplescdc.org/resources.

LAYERS OF PROTECTION

- You can help prevent COVID spread by using multiple layers of protection: Ventilating and filtering air; masking with high-filtration masks; staying up to date with vaccines and boosters; testing before seeing others; testing and isolating after possible exposures; and physical distancing and limiting time indoors.

- If you share living space with others while isolating, you can implement additional household-specific layers of protection. These include creating isolation zones, minimizing time spent in shared zones, and clearly communicating the use of layers of protection within your household.

PLANNING AHEAD

- Improve the air quality of your home with humidifiers, purifiers, and open windows.

- Have supplies, contact info (medical provider, testing, social supports), and a plan of action ready in case of illness. Familiarize yourself with your work or school’s COVID policy and devise ways to extend the 5-day isolation period, if possible.

EXPOSURE & TESTING

- If you’ve been exposed to someone who has COVID via shared air, you should isolate yourself for a minimum of 7 days. You should use multiple tests over the course of 5–7 days to determine if you are negative.

- If you test positive, you should isolate yourself for a minimum of 10 days after your first positive result. After 10 days, use rapid tests to find out if you are negative.

- If you are experiencing symptoms, but do not have access to adequate testing, you should isolate yourself for a minimum of 10 days after the first day of symptoms.

- If you test positive or experience symptoms, notify anyone you have seen in the past 7 days and share this guide, so they can isolate and protect others as well.

SHORT & LONG-TERM RECOVERY

- If you have COVID, we encourage you to speak with a medical provider about options for pharmaceutical treatments as soon as possible.

- Some home remedies may be helpful to you depending on your symptoms: over the counter pain relievers and fever reducers; cough suppressants and lozenges; and medicine to help you manage an upset stomach.

- It is incredibly important to rest as much as possible (avoid physical and mental exertion) both during and after your infection to help with recovery and potentially help prevent Long COVID. You can find more information about specific recommendations for pacing in our full resource guide.