



## Coronavirus Disease 2019

# COVID-19

### Resources for Older Adults and Their Families

<https://covid19.colorado.gov/resources-older-adults-and-their-families>

*Note: CDPHE aims to share the most accurate information available at the current time. Please check back frequently for updates and visit [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Colorado](#) for the most current news on COVID-19 in Colorado.*

### What older adults and families need to know about COVID-19

COVID-19 is the name of a new respiratory illness spreading from person to person in many countries and states, including Colorado. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Not all coronaviruses are COVID-19.

You can find more general information about COVID-19 and other frequently asked questions by following this link: [COVID-19 CDPHE FAQ](#)

### Who is at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19?

Colorado is experiencing widespread community transmission of COVID-19. Our priority is keeping the people of our state safe. We urge Coloradans to exercise personal responsibility to protect public health. Everyone's daily preventive actions are important to reduce spread to those who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including:

- Individuals who are 65 years and older.
- Individuals with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
- Individuals who have serious heart conditions.
- Individuals who are immunocompromised.
- Pregnant women.
- Individuals determined to be high-risk by a licensed health provider.

Since COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about the virus, the current understanding about how it spreads is largely based on what is known about similar respiratory illnesses.

According to early data shared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in an interview with AARP ([Coronavirus and Older Adults: Your Questions Answered](#)), older adults are twice as likely as younger people to develop serious symptoms. Older adults experience changes to their immune systems, making it harder for their bodies to fight off diseases and infection. Many older adults are also more likely to have underlying health conditions that make it harder to cope with and recover from illness.

Reducing exposure to pathways by which the disease is spreading is especially important for people at higher risk for serious illness.

# Protecting yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19

## Through everyday actions

- Frequently and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or use your inner elbow or sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean surfaces in your home, and personal items such as cell phones, using regular household products.

## Through physical distancing

- Those at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should follow Stay-at-Home recommendations, which means leaving home only for medical care and essential activities, like grocery shopping.
- Everyone is asked to wear a mask or cloth face covering while out in public for necessary activities like grocery shopping, going to work, or walking your dog.
- Ask family, friends, and service providers not to visit while they are sick.
- Don't shake hands. Instead, greet people by waving or just saying "hi."
- Keep six feet of distance between people to help reduce spread.
- Postpone non-essential travel. - [Follow CDC guidelines on travel](#).
- Try to avoid putting yourself in a situation – whatever that might be – that could increase your personal risk.
- Stay connected with loved ones by phone and online. Reach out to people if you need something. Consider if there are ways to attend meetings by phone or online.

## By being prepared

- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications, food, and supplies in case you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- Make a plan with your network about
  - How to check in with each other.
  - How others can deliver supplies so you can avoid crowds.
  - How others can assist you with medical equipment or other needs in an emergency.

## By staying informed

- Know where you can get information about community spread and public health actions in your area. Share accurate information with neighbors, friends and co-workers, especially people who may have difficulty receiving or understanding the information.
- COHELP is the public health information line for frequently asked questions about COVID-19.
  - Call 1-877-462-2911 for answers in many languages including English, Spanish (Español), Mandarin (普通话), and more
  - Email [COHELP@RMPDC.org](mailto:COHELP@RMPDC.org) (answers in English only).
- Colorado's webpage for COVID-19: [covid19.colorado.gov](https://www.colorado.gov/covid19)
- Facebook ([facebook.com/CDPHE](https://www.facebook.com/CDPHE)) and Twitter (@CDPHE)
- CDC web page [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)

## Routine and connection are important

Maintaining connections and routine are important to our well-being and sense of control during emergencies. It is also very important that if you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 that you take extra measures to put distance between yourself and other people to further reduce your risk of being exposed to this virus.

Both routine and connection can be maintained even when we are physically distancing. It may look and feel different than what we do normally, but hopefully we can find practices that support our needs and protect everyone from the disease. Distancing our bodies doesn't mean we have to totally cut off contact with other people. Keep 6 feet apart. Use technology to connect with others.

If going out has been part of older adults' routines, especially for staying connected, it is still important to find ways to stay connected.

- Check store schedules. Many offer special shopping hours for older adults.
- Maintain good routines for sleep, healthy eating, and exercise.
- Check-in with your friends and family by phone each day.
- Make a plan with your neighborhood or faith group, by which people can signal they need support.
- Schedule a time for everyone to watch the same movie or TV show at their own homes. Discuss it by phone the next day.
- Set times when you go for a walk, read a book, or learn something new.

We want people to be physically distanced, but socially connected.

## Scams and price gouging

Cyber attackers and others try to take advantage of events that draw a lot of media, like the COVID-19 outbreak. They aim to prey on our fears. Beware messages that:

- Communicate a tremendous **sense of urgency**. The bad guys are trying to rush you into making a mistake.
- **Pressure you** into bypassing or ignoring our security policies and procedures.
- **Promote miracle cures**, such as vaccines or medicine that will protect you. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- **Ask for personal information** from people or addresses that you don't recognize, even if they **pretend to be a health care official or government organization**.

Read more here:

- [Coronavirus: a Breeding Ground for Scams](#)
- [Coronavirus Scams: What the FTC is doing](#)

## Community resources and guidance

It is normal to be scared, sad, or angry about the risk and disruptions from a new infectious disease in our communities. Fear is a natural response to the unknown, and we are still figuring out how COVID-19 will affect our families and our communities. Colorado Crisis Services is available 24/7/365 if you need to talk. Call 1-844-493-8255.

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) has shared resources to help support people of Colorado on their webpage: [Colorado Department of Human Services](#)

On this webpage, links are provided to help people

- Find services for older adults
- Apply for cash assistance (TANF)
- Apply for child care assistance
- Apply for employment assistance
- Apply for energy assistance (LEAP)
- Apply for food assistance (SNAP)
- Apply for disability assistance (DDS)

If you are looking for other services such as caregiver support, nutrition services, transportation, in-home services, care coordination and outreach, contact your local Aging and Disability Resource Center or [Area Agency on Aging](#) by calling 1-844-265-2372.

2-1-1 is a confidential and multilingual service connecting people to vital resources across the state. No matter where you live in Colorado, you can find information about resources in your local community. Dial 2-1-1 or (866) 760-6489 toll free. They also have a webpage for COVID-19 resources: <https://www.211colorado.org/covid-19/>

## How others can support older Coloradans

Practicing physical distancing isn't necessarily about protecting yourself, it's about protecting people who are at the highest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. If you don't get sick, you can't pass it on to others who may experience more severe illness, including your parents or grandparents. We all need to champion distancing and other healthy behaviors where we live, work, and play.

Make plans to:

- Check in with each other.
- Figure out what supplies people need and how they can be delivered so those at higher risk of serious illness can avoid crowds.
- Assist others with medical equipment or other needs in an emergency.
- Consider alternatives should services such as respite, adult day care be modified for COVID-19.

Keeping physical distance can make it harder to know if something else is going wrong. That's why it is important to stay connected. If you are worried about abuse, neglect or exploitation of an at-risk adult, go to CDHS's [Adult Protective Services webpage](#) for details on what to report and when. Find the [intake number](#) for the county where the at-risk adult lives. We don't want to protect our loved ones from COVID-19 only to make it easier for them to be mistreated in other serious ways.

Families of loved ones with dementia can find 24/7 support from the Alzheimer's Association helpline at 800-272-3900. The Alzheimer's Association has also created a webpage for dementia caregiving during COVID-19 with more ideas for caregiving in assisted living and at home, as well as staying healthy.

- [Alzheimer's Association COVID-19: tips for dementia caregivers.](#)

Many caregivers in Colorado are family members. Caring for yourself is a priority so you can continue to support your loved ones. Learn more at the [Colorado Respite Coalition's website](#).

## Advance care planning

Community Resources for Older Adults – 050320

The Colorado Healthcare Ethics Resource Group has put together guides and tip sheets to help people consider specific medical treatments, values and decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage each of you to have this conversation with your family today.

Conversations about things we do not have power over help to give us a sense of control. We cannot predict every choice we may have to make, but we can give those we love the guidance to confidently make decisions for us. This is the time to help the people closest to us – our friends, spouses, parents, and grandparents – get the care that is right for them if they become seriously ill with COVID-19.

Use these [tools](#) to help guide your planning and conversations.