

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for Homeless Shelters and Homeless Service Providers

NATIONAL  
HEALTH CARE  
*for the*  
HOMELESS  
COUNCIL

Coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-2019, is a new respiratory illness caused by a virus that spreads from person to person.

## Symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had symptoms of:



FEVER



COUGHING



SHORTNESS OF BREATH



These can appear up to 14 days after being exposed to the virus.

## Who is Most At Risk

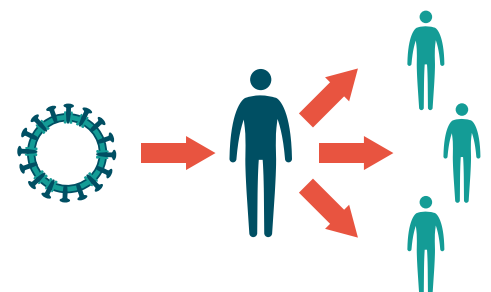
Anyone can get this illness. People at the highest risk are:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease
- People who regularly come into contact with sick people.

## How Does It Spread

COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to the cold and the flu:

- Invisible droplets carried by the air caused by coughing and sneezing.
- Touching things with the virus on them, and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth.



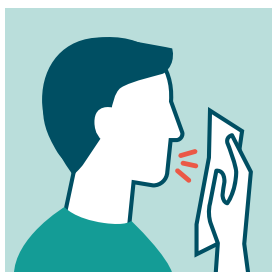
# How to Protect Yourself and Others

For many people, the shelter is home. Shelters should be prepared to take in people who may have symptoms, and to protect others who must share the same facility.

## Protect Yourself



AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK. CLOSE CONTACT = ABOUT 6 FEET.



COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES. IF YOU USE A TISSUE, THROW IT IN THE TRASH.



AVOID TOUCHING THE EYES, MOUTH, AND NOSE.

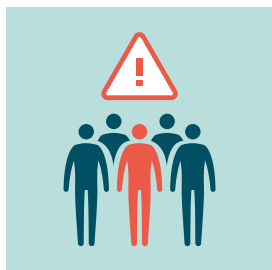


WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS. IF SOAP AND WATER ARE NOT AVAILABLE, USE ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER.



IF YOU ARE IN CONTACT WITH SICK CLIENTS, WEARING A FACE MASK OR RESPIRATOR MAY LOWER YOUR RISK.

## Protect Others



ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO ARE SICK TO AVOID OTHERS.



IF PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK WEAR FACE MASKS OR RESPIRATORS IT MAY LOWER THE RISK TO OTHERS. FOR PEOPLE AT THE HIGHEST RISK, WEARING A FACE MASK OR RESPIRATOR MAY LOWER THEIR RISK.



MAKE SURE HAND WASHING SUPPLIES ARE EASY TO FIND AND USE.



REGULARLY CLEAN AND DISINFECT CONTACT SURFACES. THE VIRUS CAN EXIST FOR MANY HOURS ON SURFACES.



ON SURFACES, USE A DETERGENT OR SOAP AND WATER FIRST. THEN, USE A DISINFECTANT.

Share accurate information about COVID-19, without increasing fear.

# How to Care for the Sick

Caring for sick clients first requires assessing the severity of the illness to see if they are in need of medical evaluation.

- Gather information from the client.
- Help them describe how they are feeling by asking about their symptoms and when they first noticed them.
- Try to gauge the severity of the symptoms by using a 1 - 10 scale (10 being the worst).
- Take their temperature if possible. An oral temperature of 101°F constitutes a fever.
- Common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus) are fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

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## What to Do

If possible, designate a room and bathroom for clients with respiratory symptoms to separate them from others and clean/disinfect the room daily. If individual rooms are not available, consider placing the person in a large, well-ventilated room, increase spacing between beds, use sheets to create temporary barriers between beds, and arrange beds so that clients lie head-to-toe. Avoid housing the sick person in a room with people who are at increased risk of complications from COVID-19; older adults and those with asthma, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, and pregnancy.

- Provide the sick person with a mask.
- Encourage the person to lie down and rest.
- Prevent dehydration. Encourage the person to drink plenty of water, clear soup, decaffeinated tea, or juice.
- Provide a blanket if possible.
- Encourage the person to wash their hands frequently and provide them with hand sanitizer, a box of tissues and a plastic bag or lined garbage can to dispose of tissues.
- Encourage the person to cough into their elbow area or cover their mouth with tissues or paper towels when they cough or sneeze.
- Have meals brought to the sick person's room if possible.
- Check on the person every two to three hours. For clients who could be at high risk for complications from COVID-19 (those who are older or have underlying health conditions) reach out to them more regularly if possible.



If you identify any client with severe symptoms, notify your public health department and arrange for the person to receive immediate medical care. If COVID-19 is suspected, notify the transfer team and medical facility before transfer. See next page for list of severe symptoms.

# How to Care for Yourself

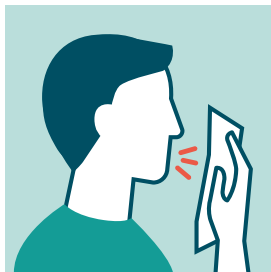
It is very important that in addition to looking out for shelter clients, you also take care of yourself.

If you are sick, stay home except to get medical care. Separating yourself from other people will decrease the chance of spreading the virus to others. If this is not possible and you must leave your home, try to avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

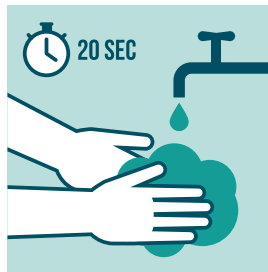
To reduce the chance of spreading the illness, follow the same guidelines you would give to someone in your care:



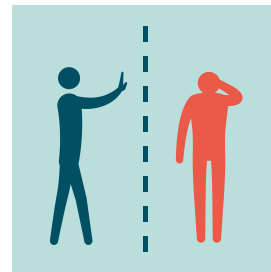
WEAR A FACEMASK AROUND OTHERS.



COVER YOUR COUGHS AND SNEEZES.



WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY.



AVOID SHARING PERSONAL ITEMS.

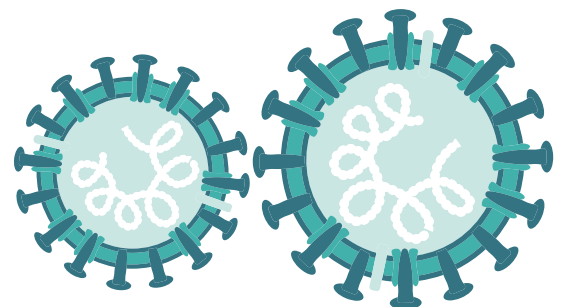


CLEAN ALL SURFACES THAT YOU REGULARLY TOUCH.

Monitor your symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if you notice your illness is worsening (e.g. difficulty breathing).

## Severe Symptoms

- Extremely difficult breathing (not being able to speak without gasping for air).
- Bluish lips or face.
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest.
- Severe persistent dizziness or lightheadedness.
- New confusion, or inability to arouse.
- New seizure or seizures that won't stop.



## More Information

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For more information visit the **Coronavirus Resources Section of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council's website: [www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)**

Sources: Information in this document came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other sources available at [www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)