

AGING & independence

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

SPECIAL EDITION MARCH 19: CORONAVIRUS

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STAY HEALTHY, STAY HOME!

To view the up-to-date orders, guidelines, and recommendations from the County's Public Health Officer, visit www.coronavirus-sd.com.

WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes diseases, ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory disease. The 2019 novel (new) coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that hasn't been identified before in humans. As of **March 19, 2020**, there has been community transmission of coronavirus disease, also referred to as COVID-19. The extent of local transmission is unknown. If infected, older adults and those with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems are at higher risk of serious illness or complications.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- Close contact (within 6 feet)
- Respiratory droplets from people coughing or sneezing
- Close personal contact (touching or shaking hands)
- Touching an object/surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

For current information about COVID-19, please visit:

- www.coronavirus-sd.com
- www.cdph.ca.gov
- www.cdc.gov
- **Information for facilities (see page 3)**

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- Cough
- General feeling of being unwell

There is no specific treatment; however, many symptoms can be relieved. There is currently no vaccine available.

WHO IS HIGH RISK FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS?

The current evidence, based on data from China and other parts of the world, indicates the following groups are at highest risk for COVID-19.

- Older adults (60 and over)
- Individuals with serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.
- Individuals with compromised immune systems

PREVENTION MEASURES

There are a variety of steps that older adults and those with chronic medical conditions can take to protect their health and the health of those around them. It is important to stay calm, but be prepared. Please see **page 2** for a list of recommendations from the California Department of Public Health.



MEASURES FOR HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS

Individuals and caregivers can take steps now to slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends implementing the following steps:

- **Stay home as much as possible.** For the latest orders, guidelines, and recommendations on gatherings, visit www.coronavirus-sd.com.
- **Avoid non-essential gatherings.** If you must be around others to access essential services (e.g., grocery shopping), keep a distance of at least 6 feet.
- **Stay home when sick.** Doing so is of critical importance to halt the possible spread of illness.
 - If you have an elevated temperature, remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
 - Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, (e.g., high fever or difficulty breathing).
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and cell phones).
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
 - Or, use a household cleaner that is registered with the EPA as approved for killing emerging viral pathogens (e.g., Clorox Disinfectant Wipes, Lysol, etc.). Consult www.cdc.gov for information on preventing COVID-19 spread in communities.
- Use “respiratory etiquette.”
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue away, and then wash your hands. Have adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.
- Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
 - Encourage hand washing by caregivers, family, and friends.
 - Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) to supplement hand washing.
 - Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Have supplies on hand (e.g., enough groceries and household goods to last several weeks).
- Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications.
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
- Have a plan for if you get sick:
 - Consult with your health care provider for more information about monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.
 - Stay in touch with others by phone or email. You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
 - Determine who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick.
- More information for people at higher risk and special populations can be found at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups

FAMILY AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Know what medications your loved one or client is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care needs) and create a back-up plan.
- Stock up on non-perishable food items to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- If a loved one is in a care facility, even though visits are currently limited, connect with your loved one via phone and monitor the situation.
- For additional guidance for home care workers and caregivers, visit:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, AND STAY CONNECTED

One of the most effective ways to prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19 is to practice “social distancing.” Individuals, especially those at high-risk, should **stay home as much as possible and avoid non-essential gatherings**. When leaving home is necessary to access essential services (e.g., obtaining food and medications), keep a distance of at least six feet between yourself and others. However, social connection is still important. Stay connected to friends and loved ones by phone, text, email, or video conferencing. Attend classes online. You can still stay fit and healthy from home, as well. Visit www.healthierlivingsd.org to learn how to participate in a Feeling Fit Club class from home! Walking outside for exercise is an option too, but you must maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

In these uncertain times, many people may need to access community resources or supports. For information on available resources, such as food assistance, call **2-1-1** or visit www.211sandiego.org.

Fortunately, many organizations and businesses are stepping up to help our community with a variety of needs. For instance, San Diego Futures Foundation (SDFF) is providing refurbished computers to workers and students who may need to work from home and who don’t currently have a computer (and who meet certain eligibility criteria). Seniors in need of a computer may also connect with SDFF to learn more about low-cost computer options and internet. For more information, call **(619) 269-1684** or visit www.sdfutures.org.

Additional resources and information will be included in future versions of this Special Edition Bulletin. To access the most recent edition, visit www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov.

INFORMATION FOR FACILITIES

- Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html
- Information for Assisted Living/Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs):
caassistedliving.org/pdf/resources/coronavirus.pdf

IMPORTANT WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information, refer to the websites listed below. If you have questions, call **2-1-1** to speak to someone.

- www.coronavirus-sd.com
- www.cdph.ca.gov
- www.cdc.gov



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When You Don't Know Where To Turn Turn To Us!



Whether the need is for assessment, service referrals, or follow-up, with just one phone call, you or a loved one can receive help for:

- Seniors
- Disabled adults
- Abused adults
- Those requiring home-based care to prevent institutionalization

As a public agency, we provide comprehensive information and impartial assistance free of charge to county residents. Since 1974, people have been turning to us at Aging & Independence Services. You can too.



Call Toll Free: **(800) 339-4661**
www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov



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