

# People at Higher Risk for COVID-19 Complications

## What to do if you are at higher risk:

- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home for prolonged periods of time.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Avoid crowds.
- Stay up to date on [CDC Travel Health Notices](#).

## Who is at Higher Risk

Older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease seem to be at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. Early data suggest older people are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness. This may be because:

- As people age, their immune systems change, making it harder for their body 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.

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. Depending on the severity of the outbreak, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce exposures to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease.

If you are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications due to age or because you have a severe underlying medical condition, it is especially important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of exposure.

## Get Ready for COVID-19 Now

Consult with your health care provider for more information about [monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19](#).

- Have supplies on hand
- Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and 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 enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

- If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, take extra measures to put distance between yourself and other people
  - Stay home as much as possible.
    - Consider ways of getting food brought to your house through family, social, or commercial networks
  - Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces
- [Make a plan for what to do if you get sick](#)
  - 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.
  - Take everyday preventive actions
    - Clean your hands often
    - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
    - If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
    - To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.
    - Wash your hands after touching surfaces in public places.
    - Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
  - [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 & cell phones)

### **Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs**

- Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs\*:
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

**(continued)**

## **What to Do if You Get Sick**

Stay home and call your doctor

- Call your healthcare provider and let them know about your symptoms. Tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help them take care of you and keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home. Follow CDC instructions for [how to take care of yourself at home](#).
- Know when to get emergency help
  - Get medical attention immediately if you have any of the emergency warning signs listed above.

## **What Others can do to Support Older Adults**

Community Support for Older Adults

- Community preparedness planning for COVID-19 should include older adults and people with disabilities, and the organizations that support them in their communities, to ensure their needs are taken into consideration.
  - Many of these individuals live in the community, and many depend on services and supports provided in their homes or in the community to maintain their health and independence.
- Long-term care facilities should be vigilant to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. [Information for long-term care facilities can be found here](#).

## **Family and Caregiver Support**

- Know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed 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 you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.



# What People With HIV Need to Know About the New Coronavirus

New research is emerging about how the respiratory virus spreads and how people can protect themselves and others.

March 2, 2020 By [Liz Highleyman](#)

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A month after the new coronavirus respiratory disease known as COVID-19 came to public attention, researchers and public health officials are continuing to learn about its spread, its mortality rate and who is most likely to become seriously ill.

Although much remains unknown, it's clear that older people, those with other health conditions and people with compromised immune systems have a higher likelihood of severe illness. This includes people living with HIV, especially those with low CD4 counts. But taking some basic precautions can lower your risk and improve your well-being.

## COVID-19 Basics

As of March 2, there were 43 confirmed or presumed positive cases of COVID-19 detected in the United States, [according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). In addition, there have been 48 cases among people brought back to the United States, mostly from the Diamond Princess cruise ship. The virus now appears to be spreading locally within communities. Worldwide, more than 87,000 cases have been reported, [according to the World Health Organization](#). Most of these are in China, but 58 countries have now seen cases.

The mortality rate for COVID-19 is thought to be around 2.5%, based on the numbers reported in the hardest-hit areas of China. This is substantially higher than the typical seasonal flu (around 0.1%), but much lower than the death rates of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) coronaviruses, at around 10% and 30%, respectively.

However, the true COVID-19 mortality rate is not yet known because it is unclear how many people have contracted the new virus. If a large number of people have no or mild symptoms and never seek medical attention, the pool of infected people could be much larger and the death rate could be much lower. Receiving supportive treatment earlier in the course of the disease also lowers the risk of death.

A majority of people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath. Around 20% develop more severe illness, including pneumonia and acute respiratory

distress syndrome, which may require intensive care and in some cases mechanical ventilation.

But not everyone who contracts the virus is at equal risk. According to a [recent study](#) by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention of more than 45,000 confirmed cases, people with coexisting conditions [had higher death rates](#): 5.6% for cancer, 6.0% for high blood pressure, 6.3% for chronic respiratory disease, 7.3% for diabetes and 10.5% for cardiovascular disease. The greatest risk was seen among people age 80 or older, at 14.8%.

Experts do not yet know how long someone can transmit the coronavirus, officially known as SARS-CoV-2, before they develop symptoms or after they recover. It is also unclear whether the virus can linger in the body and later relapse; whether it confers immunity and, if so, for how long; or what the likelihood is of becoming infected again.

Researchers are hard at work to develop treatments for COVID-19 and a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2. [Certain HIV medications](#) have shown activity against the coronavirus. Clinical trials of Gilead Sciences' [antiviral drug remdesivir](#) are currently underway in China and [at the University of Nebraska Medical Center](#) in Omaha—home of the CDC's largest biocontainment unit—where some people who contracted the virus overseas are being treated. A [vaccine from Moderna Therapeutics](#) has been sent to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for the first Phase I study. However, human trials are expected to last at least a year before a vaccine is ready for widespread use.

### What About People With HIV?

Compared with the general population, people with compromised immunity are at higher risk of contracting the new coronavirus and developing more serious COVID-19 illness. The HIV population is aging, and nearly half are over 50. Those with low CD4 T-cell counts, indicating advanced immune suppression, are at greatest risk. People with HIV are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease and may do so at a younger age. Certain HIV medications, especially older drugs, can cause neutropenia, or depletion of immune system white blood cells that fight infection.

“When you look at who’s been most profoundly ill, it tends to be people who are older, in their 60s, 70s and 80s. As you get older, your immune system doesn’t function as well,” says Steve Pergam, MD, MPH, of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Division at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Among people living with HIV, “it’s all based on level of immune suppression,” Pergam told POZ. “For an HIV patient who is on stable antiretroviral therapy and has a normal CD4 count, their risk may be slightly increased. People often lump HIV patients with other immunosuppressed patients, but HIV is a different disease than it was years ago. For people who have a reconstituted immune system because of treatment, I think the risk is not going to be tremendously different.”

“For cancer patients on chemotherapy, people with solid organ transplants or bone marrow transplants and those who use high-dose steroids for autoimmune diseases, the risk will likely be more severe,” he continues. “They may shed the virus for longer. They may be more likely to

develop pneumonia and more likely to die. We don't know until we have more information, but many of us have concerns about that."

People with a weakened immune system may be unable to fight off the virus, or they may develop an excessive inflammatory immune response known as a cytokine storm. Paradoxically, immune suppression can sometimes mean fewer or milder early symptoms, such as fever, even as the virus and the body's response to it ravage the lungs and other organs.

"The symptoms may be more subtle, so we have to have more awareness," Pergam says.

"Oftentimes their initial symptoms may be less prominent, but the level of complex disease may be more severe."

### Taking Precautions

Experts recommend that everyone take common-sense precautions to prevent transmission of the new coronavirus—the same ones recommended to prevent seasonal flu:

- Avoid close contact—meaning within about six feet—with people who have a cough or other respiratory symptoms.
- [Wash your hands with soap and water](#) thoroughly and often for at least 20 seconds.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Healthy people do not need to routinely wear face masks to prevent infection, but use a mask if you are caring for someone who is ill.
- Get the flu vaccine. Older people should also consider getting vaccinated against pneumonia.

If you are ill:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your bent elbow, and immediately dispose of tissues in the trash.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- If you think you may have been exposed to the coronavirus, contact a health care provider promptly if you develop a fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
- Before you go to a clinic or hospital, call ahead so the staff can take appropriate precautions.
- Wearing a face mask can stop the spread of droplets that can transmit the virus to others.

Older individuals, people living with HIV and those with cardiovascular disease or other conditions may benefit from extra precautions.

“I advise people to have hand sanitizer wherever they go and use it frequently in public places—I have it in my pocket all the time. Wash your hands with soap and water long enough to sing the ‘Happy Birthday’ song,” Pergam advises.

“I always talk with patients about the idea of social distancing. I’m not saying you can’t live your life as a normal person. But you don’t have to go out to dinner when a restaurant is super crowded—you might eat a little earlier or you might order in,” he adds. “If you’re having friends or family over, ask them if they have any symptoms. Have a hand gel dispenser at your front door and make sure everybody uses it. Make sure to tell friends and family that they should be up to date on their vaccines for other things.”

People who need prescription medications should try to have a supply to last at least a couple weeks and preferably a few months. Shortages could happen because the ingredients for many drugs—especially generics—are produced in China. Pergam acknowledges that this can be difficult because of high drug costs and insurance restrictions. You may be able to order medications for three months at a time. Or renew your prescriptions as soon as you are able to—even if they haven’t run out yet—so you have a buffer of several days.

The Food and Drug Administration is keeping track of medication shortages that may result from the coronavirus epidemic. According to a [recent statement](#), only one unspecified drug is now in short supply. HIV expert Tim Horn of NASTAD (formerly the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors) checked on the status of brand name and generic antiretroviral drugs and [found no current shortages](#).

It’s also a good idea to have at least a two-week supply of food, water, cleaning supplies and other household necessities on hand. And don’t forget to stock up on pet food. You may be able to have goods delivered to avoid going to stores. Or ask a friend or family member without compromised immunity for help.

As the COVID-19 outbreak becomes more widespread, “disruption to everyday life might be severe,” according to Nancy Messonnier, director of CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, who advises businesses to explore remote work options and families to consider plans in case schools close.

“Talk to your employer about opportunities to work from home,” Pergam advises. “And have them remind everyone you work with not to come to work sick.”

Stay in communication with your health care providers, and keep up to date on new developments. Let them know if you have questions or concerns, especially if you have new symptoms or were recently exposed to someone who is ill.

“The biggest thing to get across is, don’t panic,” Pergam says. “We’re all expecting this to be a

prolonged and complicated process. The best thing people can do is focus on ways that they can protect themselves because those small things can be enough to provide an extra layer of protection for everyone.

For more details, visit the [U.S. and global coronavirus tracker from Johns Hopkins University](#) and the [CDC COVID-19 website](#).

And for related articles in POZ, see “[Coronavirus Alert: Vital Ingredients in HIV Meds Are Synthesized in China. Should You Worry About Your Supply?](#)” The article also looks at Vice President Mike Pence and AIDS expert Deborah Birx, who are leading the U.S. response to the virus. Additional news items include “[HIV Drugmaker Gilead Sciences Tests a Possible Treatment for New Coronavirus](#)” and “[COVID-19 Puts People With HIV in China at Risk of Med Shortages.](#)”

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<https://www.poz.com/article/people-hiv-need-know-new-coronavirus>



# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## COVID-19 and Animals

### Key Points

- We do not know the exact source of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), but we know that it originally came from an animal source.
- At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.
- We are still learning about this virus, but it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations.

For more information, see [COVID-19 and Animals Frequently Asked Questions](#). For information on pets, see [If You Have Pets](#).

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses cause cold-like illnesses in people, while others cause illness in certain types of animals, such as cattle, camels, and bats. Some coronaviruses, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, infect only animals and do not infect humans.

## Risk of animals spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to people

Some coronaviruses that infect animals can sometimes be spread to humans and then spread between people, but this is rare. This is what happened with the virus that caused the current outbreak of COVID-19. However, we do not know the exact source of this virus. Public health officials and partners are working hard to identify the source of COVID-19. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person to person.

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, and talking. Recent studies show that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.

## Risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to animals

We are still learning about this virus, but we know it is primarily spreading from person-to-person and it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations.

The [first case](#) in the United States of an animal testing positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 was a tiger with a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City. Samples from this tiger were collected and tested after several lions and tigers at the zoo showed signs of respiratory illness. Public health officials believe these large cats became sick after being

exposed to a zoo employee who was infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. This investigation is ongoing.

CDC is working with human and animal health partners to monitor this situation and will continue to provide updates as information becomes available. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

For more information, visit CDC's [If You Have Pets and Healthy Pets, Healthy People](#) website.



The first US case of an animal testing positive for COVID-19 was a tiger at a NY zoo.

## Guidance and recommendations

- [Interim Guidance for Public Health Professionals Managing People with COVID-19 in Home Care and Isolation Who Have Pets or Other Animals](#)
- [Interim recommendations for intake of companion animals from households where humans with COVID-19 are present](#) [↗](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Veterinary Clinics](#)
- [Evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals](#) [↗](#)

### Related Resources

[COVID-19 and Animals FAQs](#) [↗](#)

[COVID-19 and Pets](#)

[Information on Bringing an Animal into the United States](#)

[World Organisation for Animal Health: Q&As on COVID-19](#)



[USDA: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) [↗](#)

[FDA: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) [↗](#)

[USDA Statement on the Confirmation of COVID-19 Infection in a Tiger in New York](#) [↗](#)



# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## If You Have Pets

### Key Points

- CDC is aware of a small number of pets worldwide, including cats and dogs, [reported](#) to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19.
- Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.
- It appears that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from people to animals in some situations.
- Treat pets as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people or animals outside the household. If a person inside the household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.
- This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

For more information on COVID and Animals, see [COVID-19 and Animals](#) and [COVID-19 and Animals Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses cause cold-like illnesses in people, while others cause illness in certain types of animals, such as cattle, camels, and bats. Some coronaviruses, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, infect only animals and do not infect humans.

## Risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to pets

We are still learning about the virus that causes COVID-19, but it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations.

CDC is aware of a small number of pets, including dogs and cats, [reported](#) to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19. Only a few of the pets reported to be positive showed signs of illness.

## What to do if you own pets

Until we learn more about how this virus affects animals, treat pets as you would other human family members to protect them from a possible infection.

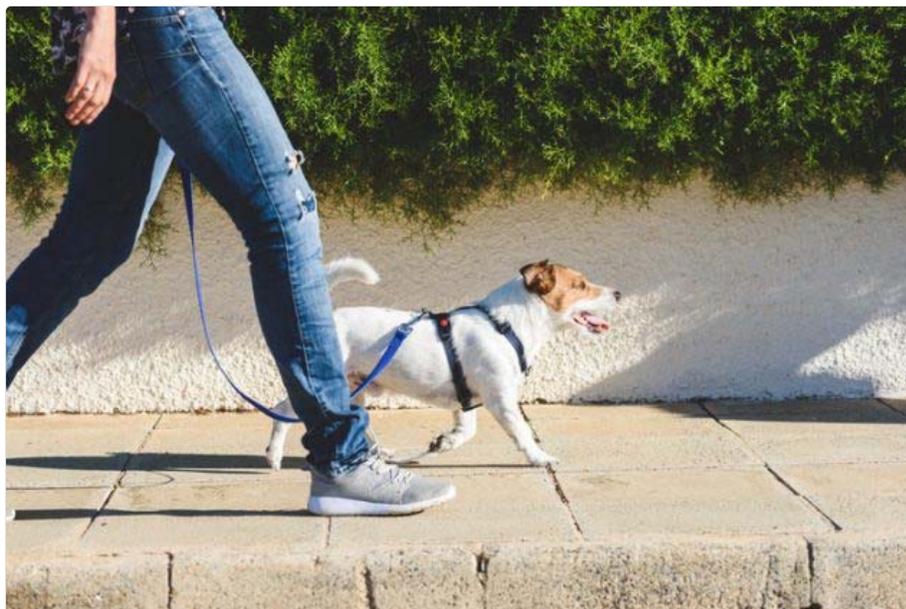
- Do not let pets interact with people or other animals outside the household.
- Keep cats indoors when possible to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people.
- Walk dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people and animals.
- Avoid dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather.

There is a small number of animals around the world reported to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly

after having contact with a person with COVID-19. Talk to your veterinarian if your pet gets sick or if you have any concerns about your pet's health.

## Protect pets if you are sick

If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed by a test), you should restrict contact with your pets and other animals, just like you would with people. Until we know more about this virus, people sick with COVID-19 should **avoid contact with pets and other animals**.



- When possible, have another member of your household care for your pets while you are sick.
- Avoid contact with your pet including, petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food or bedding.
- If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wear a cloth face covering and wash your hands before and after you interact with them.

If you are sick with COVID-19 and your pet becomes sick, **do not take your pet to the veterinary clinic yourself**. Call your veterinarian and let them know you have been sick with COVID-19. Some veterinarians may offer telemedicine consultations or other plans for seeing sick pets. Your veterinarian can evaluate your pet and determine the next steps for your pet's treatment and care.



For more information visit: [What to Do if You are Sick](#).

## Stay healthy around animals

In the United States, there is no evidence that animals are playing a significant role in the spread of COVID-19. Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. However, because all animals can carry germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice [healthy habits](#) around pets and other animals.

- Wash your hands after handling animals, their food, waste, or supplies.
- Practice good pet hygiene and clean up after pets properly.
- Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions about your pet's health.
- Be aware that [children 5 years of age and younger](#), people with weakened immune systems, and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get sick from germs some animals can carry.

For more information, visit CDC's [COVID-19 and Animals](#), and [Healthy Pets, Healthy People website](#).

## Guidance and recommendations

- [Interim Guidance for Public Health Professionals Managing People with COVID-19 in Home Care and Isolation Who](#)

### Have Pets or Other Animals

- [Interim recommendations for intake of companion animals from households where humans with COVID-19 are present](#) 
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Veterinary Clinics](#)
- [Evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals](#) 

## More Information

[COVID-19 and Animals FAQs](#)

[USDA: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) 

[Information on Bringing an Animal into the United States](#)

[FDA: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) 

[World Organisation for Animal Health: Q&As on COVID-19](#) 

[USDA Statement on the Confirmation of COVID-19 Infection in a Tiger in New York](#) 

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## Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak

### What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sports events and religious services may be cancelled.

### What Is Quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

### What Is Isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

## Introduction

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, local officials may require the public to take measures to limit and control the spread of the disease. This tip sheet provides information about **social distancing**, **quarantine**, and **isolation**. The government has the right to enforce federal and state laws related to public health if people within the country get sick with highly contagious diseases that have the potential to develop into outbreaks or pandemics.

This tip sheet describes feelings and thoughts you may have during and after social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. It also suggests ways to care for your behavioral health during these experiences and provides resources for more help.

## What To Expect: Typical Reactions

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. People may feel:

### Anxiety, worry, or fear related to:

- Your own health status
- The health status of others whom you may have exposed to the disease
- The resentment that your friends and family may feel if they need to go into quarantine as a result of contact with you
- The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease
- Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security
- The challenges of securing things you need, such as groceries and personal care items
- **Concern** about being able to effectively care for children or others in your care
- **Uncertainty or frustration** about how long you will need to remain in this situation, and uncertainty about the future
- **Loneliness** associated with feeling cut off from the world and from loved ones
- **Anger** if you think you were exposed to the disease because of others' negligence
- **Boredom and frustration** because you may not be able to work or engage in regular day-to-day activities
- **Uncertainty or ambivalence** about the situation
- **A desire** to use alcohol or drugs to cope
- **Symptoms of depression**, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleeping too little or too much

- **Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, such as intrusive distressing memories, flashbacks (reliving the event), nightmares, changes in thoughts and mood, and being easily startled

If you or a loved one experience any of these reactions for 2 to 4 weeks or more, contact your health care provider or one of the resources at the end of this tip sheet.

## Ways To Support Yourself During Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation

### UNDERSTAND THE RISK

Consider the real risk of harm to yourself and others around you. The public perception of risk during a situation such as an infectious disease outbreak is often inaccurate. Media coverage may create the impression that people are in immediate danger when really the risk for infection may be very low. Take steps to get the facts:

- Stay up to date on what is happening, while limiting your media exposure. Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry. Remember that children are especially affected by what they hear and see on television.
- Look to credible sources for information on the infectious disease outbreak (see page 3 for sources of reliable outbreak-related information).

### BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE

Speaking out about your needs is particularly important if you are in quarantine, since you may not be in a hospital or other facility where your basic needs are met. Ensure you have what you need to feel safe, secure, and comfortable.

- Work with local, state, or national health of-

officials to find out how you can arrange for groceries and toiletries to be delivered to your home as needed.

- Inform health care providers or health authorities of any needed medications and work with them to ensure that you continue to receive those medications.

### EDUCATE YOURSELF

Health care providers and health authorities should provide information on the disease, its diagnosis, and treatment.

- Do not be afraid to ask questions—clear communication with a health care provider may help reduce any distress associated with social distancing, quarantine, or isolation.
- Ask for written information when available.
- Ask a family member or friend to obtain information in the event that you are unable to secure this information on your own.

### WORK WITH YOUR EMPLOYER TO REDUCE FINANCIAL STRESS

If you're unable to work during this time, you may experience stress related to your job status or financial situation.

- Provide your employer with a clear explanation of why you are away from work.
- Contact the U.S. Department of Labor toll-free at 1-866-487-2365 about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows U.S. employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for serious medical conditions, or to care for a family member with a serious medical condition.
- Contact your utility providers, cable and Internet provider, and other companies from whom you get monthly bills to explain your situation and request alternative bill payment arrangements as needed.

#### CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom during social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. You can:

- Use the telephone, email, text messaging, and social media to connect with friends, family, and others.
- Talk “face to face” with friends and loved ones using Skype or FaceTime.
- If approved by health authorities and your health care providers, arrange for your friends and loved ones to bring you newspapers, movies, and books.
- Sign up for emergency alerts via text or email to ensure you get updates as soon as they are available.
- Call SAMHSA’s free 24-hour Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990, if you feel lonely or need support.
- Use the Internet, radio, and television to keep up with local, national, and world events.

- If you need to connect with someone because of an ongoing alcohol or drug problem, consider calling your local Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous offices.

#### TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

If you are in a medical facility, you may have access to health care providers who can answer your questions. However, if you are quarantined at home, and you’re worried about physical symptoms you or your loved ones may be experiencing, call your doctor or other health care provider:

- Ask your provider whether it would be possible to schedule remote appointments via Skype or FaceTime for mental health, substance use, or physical health needs.
- In the event that your doctor is unavailable and you are feeling stressed or are in crisis, call the hotline numbers listed at the end of this tip sheet for support.

#### USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO COPE AND RELAX

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or pray, or engage in activities you enjoy.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.
- Talk about your experiences and feelings to loved ones and friends, if you find it helpful.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking; consider keeping a journal where you write down things you are grateful for or that are going well.

#### AFTER SOCIAL DISTANCING, QUARANTINE, OR ISOLATION

You may experience mixed emotions, including a sense of relief. If you were isolated because

### Sources for Reliable Outbreak Related Information

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
<http://www.cdc.gov>

#### World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization  
525 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-974-3000  
<http://www.who.int/en>

you had the illness, you may feel sadness or anger because friends and loved ones may have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.

The best way to end this common fear is to learn about the disease and the actual risk to others. Sharing this information will often calm fears in others and allow you to reconnect with them.

If you or your loved ones experience symptoms of extreme stress—such as trouble sleeping, problems with eating too much or too little, inability to carry out routine daily activities, or using drugs or alcohol to cope—speak to a health care provider or call one of the hotlines listed to the right for a referral.

**If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions such as sadness, depression, anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or someone else, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).**

## Helpful Resources

### Hotlines

#### **SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline**

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and español)

SMS: Text TalkWithUs to 66746

SMS (español): "Hablanos" al 66746

TTY: 1-800-846-8517

Website (English): <http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

Website (español): <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/espanol>

#### **SAMHSA's National Helpline**

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral Information Service in English and español)

Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

#### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Toll-Free (English): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Toll-Free (español): 1-888-628-9454

TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)

Website (English): <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Website (español): <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/gethelp/spanish.aspx>

### Treatment Locators

#### **Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator Website:**

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

#### **FindTreatment.gov**

For help finding treatment 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

<https://findtreatment.gov/>

#### **SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center**

Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515

Email: [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov)

Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

**\*Note: Inclusion or mention of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
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