NorthShore Care Guide for Adult Patients with COVID-19

Your recovery is our main priority.

For other recovery resources, including versions of the full care guide in different languages, please visit northshore.org/covid19.

What are the emergency warning signs and some common symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients experience the COVID-19 virus differently. Some have mild symptoms while others have severe respiratory illness. If you are experiencing emergency warning signs for COVID-19, please seek immediate medical attention.

Emergency warning signs include:
• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, OR
• Persistent pain or pressure in the chest, OR
• New confusion or inability to arouse, OR
• Bluish lips or face

It is common to experience one or more of the following, more mild, symptoms:
• Fever
• Cough
• Congestion
• Sore throat
• Runny nose
• Muscle aches with flu-like symptoms
• Decrease in sense of smell or taste
• Loss of appetite
• Chills or shaking chills
• Headache
• Diarrhea
• Nausea or other gastrointestinal symptoms

This is not a complete list of the symptoms you may experience. Please contact your health care provider if you experience any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.
What are some over-the-counter products and care tips for recovering from COVID-19 at home?

Recovering at home can help to stop the spread of COVID-19. If you are experiencing mild symptoms from COVID-19, you can try the following remedies:

For fevers, body aches and headaches:
- Acetaminophen, such as Tylenol

For cough and mucus relief:
- Mucinex-DM, Extra Strength

For sore throat and cough:
- Cough drops, like Halls or Cepacol

For sore throat:
- Salt water, gargle three times a day—add ½–1 tsp salt in 8oz. of warm water
- Fresh Ginger + Lemon + Honey Tea (Add 1 tablespoon of each to boiling water, let simmer for 3–4 minutes, strain and drink. You can also adjust the quantity of each ingredient based on taste)

For congestion:
- Vicks VapoRub, apply to chest and under nose as often as you would like

For nasal congestion:
- Saline nasal spray, up to twice a day

To avoid dry air:
- Warm steam or humidifier

To avoid dehydration:
- At least 1 glass of water every hour (or Pedialyte or Gatorade)

How can I seek medical care if my condition worsens?

• Contact your health care provider if you experience worsening symptoms, especially shortness of breath or a pulse oximeter reading of 92% or lower.
• Call 911 if you have a medical emergency, alert the dispatch that you have COVID-19 and put on a face mask, if possible.
• If you choose to take yourself to an Emergency Department due to worsening symptoms, please choose one from the following list:

For Adult Patients:
NorthShore Glenbrook Hospital  
(847) 657-5632
NorthShore Evanston Hospital  
(847) 570-2111
Swedish Hospital  
(773) 878-8200

For Pediatric Patients:
Advocate Children’s Hospital  
(847) 723-5154
Lurie Children's Hospital  
(312) 227-3800

Call ahead to the Emergency Department and notify the charge nurse that you have COVID-19 and which symptoms you are experiencing. (Emergency Department phone numbers have been provided, in the list above.)
A pulse oximeter (pulse ox) is a small, non-invasive test used to monitor the amount of oxygen carried throughout your body. We have provided you with a pulse ox finger reader to help you and your health care provider decide if you need to seek further medical care. The reading from the pulse ox is added information to the symptoms you are experiencing.

**Instructions for use:**
- Please carefully read the instructions provided with the pulse oximeter finger reader
- Before taking your reading, remove any nail polish from your fingernail
- Take a reading at least three times each day (morning, afternoon, evening) for 14 days after being diagnosed with COVID-19
- Each time you take a reading, do it once while sitting quietly for three minutes and once after walking at a normal pace for three minutes
- Wait at least 30 seconds for each reading to be completed
- Record the lowest oxygen saturation value with each reading
- Keep all of your recordings so you are able to share them with your care team if further medical care is needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pulse Ox Reading</th>
<th>What Should You Do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92% or higher</td>
<td>Nothing more needs to be done</td>
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<tr>
<td>84% or lower</td>
<td>Go to an Emergency Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>85%-91%</td>
<td>If the reading was taken while sitting, sit quietly for 10 minutes and then take another reading. If the reading was taken after walking, walk for 3 more minutes and then take another reading. If the repeat check is 85%-91%, go to an Emergency Department.</td>
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Track your Pulse Ox readings below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Walking or Sitting</th>
<th>Pulse Oximeter Reading</th>
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What can I do to protect others?

If you have been diagnosed with or think you may have COVID-19, please follow the guidelines below to help protect other people in your home and community:

• Stay home, except for getting medical care
  – Do not go to work, school or public areas
  – Do not use public transportation, taxis or ride-sharing
  – If you must go out, to receive medical care wear a face mask

• Separate yourself from other people in your house
  – Stay in a specific “sick room”, away from the other people in your house
  – Use a separate bathroom, if available
  – Do not handle pets

• Cover your coughs and sneezes
  – Use a tissue, throw the tissue in a lined trash can and immediately wash your hands
  – If a tissue is not available, cough/sneeze into the inside of your elbow

• Wear a face mask when you must be in close proximity to others
  (refer to page 5, for safety tips regarding face masks.)

• Clean your hands often
  – Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, touching your face, going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food
  – Soap and water are the best option, especially if your hands are visibly dirty
  – If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry

• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, especially with unwashed hands

• Closely follow the household cleanliness recommendations below:
  – Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people in your home
  – Wash any of the above items thoroughly with soap and water or put into the dishwasher after use
  – Routinely clean high-touch surfaces in your “sick room” and bathroom. High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables
  – Clean and disinfect areas that may have blood, stool, or bodily fluids on them with soap and water or another detergent and then use a household disinfectant
  For more information on household disinfectant, please visit cdc.gov/coronavirus
How can I use a face mask to protect myself and others?

Wearing a face mask is an important way to help prevent the spread of infection. You should wear a face mask when you must be in close proximity to others (including other people in your house). Remember, wearing a mask does not replace the need for social distancing.

**Some guidelines for safely using a face mask include:**

- Before touching your mask, wash your hands with soap and water.
- Place the flexible band on the bridge of your nose and the rest of the mask should cover your nose and mouth.
- Place the straps behind your ears, leaving no gaps between your face and the mask.
- While wearing the mask, avoid touching it because if there are virus particles trapped on the outside of the mask they will get on your hands when you touch it.
- If you need to adjust your mask while wearing it, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water both before and after adjusting it.
- If your mask feels damp, remove it and replace it with a new one.
- When removing your mask, carefully take it off from behind or by the straps.
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose and/or mouth when removing the mask.
- Used masks should be disposed of immediately in a lined trash can.

If you are using a cloth mask, please make sure it is washed after each use. For instructions on properly washing cloth face masks, please visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus].
What should I do when caring for someone who has COVID-19?

While most can recover from COVID-19 safely at home, older adults and people, of any age, with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes are at higher risk of developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should seek care as soon as symptoms start. If you’re caring for someone with COVID-19 at home, you should:

• Monitor the sick person closely
  – Watch for emergency warning signs of COVID-19 (refer to page 1)
  – Regularly monitor and record pulse oximeter readings (refer to page 3)

• Help treat the sick person’s symptoms
  – Make sure they drink plenty of fluids and get a lot of rest
  – Use over-the-counter products and home care tips for mild symptoms (refer to page 2)

• Seek further medical care if needed
  – Keep their health care provider’s phone number easily accessible
  – Call their health care provider if the person gets sicker
  – Use the CDC’s self-checker tool (cdc.gov/coronavirus) and a pulse oximeter finger reader to help you make decisions about when to seek further medical care

• Call 911 in the case of a medical emergency
  – Alert the dispatch that the patient has COVID-19 and put a face mask on them, if possible

How can I protect myself, as a caretaker of someone with COVID-19, and the rest of my household?

• When cleaning and disinfecting a sick person’s bedroom or bathroom
  – Do so on an as-needed basis
  – Wait as long as possible after they have used the bathroom
  – Wear a face mask and rubber or latex gloves, if available
  – Discard the face mask and gloves and wash your hands thoroughly immediately after cleaning

• When entering the sick person’s room
  – Wear a face mask, if available
  – Discard the mask and wash your hands thoroughly immediately after leaving the room
  – Stay at least six feet away from them, especially if a face mask is not available
  – Limit exposure as much as possible

• Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended
How long do I need to stay in home isolation?

If you tested positive for COVID-19, you should remain in home isolation until you’ve recovered, meaning:

• At least 10 days from the start of COVID-19 symptoms AND at least 24 hours fever free without fever reducing medication AND other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

If you did not have COVID-19, but someone in your house did, you should remain in home isolation until:

• 14 days after the last contact you had with the sick person, if they were able to isolate
  – Isolation means that the sick person maintained 6 foot social distance and/or stayed in a separate room from the rest of the people in the house
• 14 days from the date the sick person was deemed “recovered”, if they were unable to isolate

Be a Safety Ambassador!

Spread the word. Not the virus.

Scan the QR code to share safety tips with friends and family.

Take the COVID Safety Promise.

Keep our communities safe.

Check with your employee health department at work regarding return to work policies. If a letter is required, please use NorthShoreConnect to complete an eVisit or call 847-HEALTH9 (847-432-5849.)

This recommended isolation period is subject to change; please visit dph.illinois.gov/covid19 for the most up to date information.

The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with NorthShore Infection Control, Swedish Infection Control or the Illinois Department of Public Health.