# NorthShore Care Guide for Adult Patients with COVID-19

**Your recovery is our main priority.**

For other recovery resources, a full version of this care guide with additional information and versions of the full care guide in different languages, please visit **northshore.org/covid19**

## NorthShore
University HealthSystem

# 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, per the manufacturers' directions.

### 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 8 oz. 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

### 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)

**Please contact your healthcare provider to see if you would benefit from monoclonal antibody treatment or other authorized COVID-19 treatment options.**

# What is a pulse oximeter finger reader and how do I use it?

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 ox 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

## Understanding Your Pulse Ox Readings:

| Pulse Ox Reading | What Should You Do |
| --- | --- |
| 92% or higher | Nothing more needs to be done |
| 84% or lower | Go to an Emergency Department |
| 85%-91% | 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. |

## Track your Pulse Ox readings below:

| Date | Time | Walking or Sitting | Pulse Ox Reading |
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# How can I seek medical care if my condition worsens?

- Go to an Emergency Department 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) 989-3800

## 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.)

# What can I do to protect others?

Because you have been diagnosed with 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 covering your nose and mouth

• 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

*(continued)*

## What can I do to protect others? *(continued)*

- ## 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**

# 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 inside cover)
  - Regularly monitor and record pulse oximeter readings (refer to pages 2 and 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 1)

- 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 the 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 long do I need to stay in home isolation?

**For updated guidance and additional information, see www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.**

**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 were hospitalized for COVID-19 or are immunocompromised, your period of isolation is increased to 20 days from the onset of symptoms. Please connect with your doctor if you are unsure about how long you should isolate.

**If you did not have COVID-19, but someone in your house did:**

- You may need to quarantine (isolate at home) based on your vaccination status. Please refer to the CDC for updated recommendations on testing and quarantine: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html

- Please monitor for any symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to inside cover)

- Consider getting a COVID-19 test regardless of whether you have symptoms or not

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

# Getting Vaccinated Against COVID-19 Helps Prevent Future Reinfection

If you're not yet vaccinated against COVID-19, it's important that you get vaccinated after you have recovered from your illness.

While getting COVID-19 offers some natural protection or immunity from reinfection, ongoing studies suggest that individuals who had previous COVID-19 infection, but did not get vaccinated following their recovery, are significantly more likely to get reinfected when compared to someone who got vaccinated but was never infected with COVID-19.

Talk to your doctor about when it is safe to schedule a COVID-19 vaccination. Scheduling at NorthShore is fast and easy via your NorthShore*Connect* account or by calling **(847) 982-5000**. Alternatively, consider vaccination at any number of available retailer providers.