

Diagnosis: your symptoms look like Severe COVID-19 symptoms

Severe COVID-19 means that you have [pneumonia](#), which is inflammation (caused by infection) of the lungs themselves, right down into the tiny air sacs (alveoli).

Severe COVID-19 is much more likely if you are older or have any of the [health conditions](#) that make you vulnerable. Severe COVID is not impossible in the healthy but it is much less common.

Patients with severe COVID are very breathless (and may be unable to breathe at a comfortable rate on slight moving around or even at rest) and breathe faster than usual, even when sitting still. People with severe COVID cannot finish a sentence without extra breaths. They may even avoid speaking. Their oxygen levels may have fallen so the urge to breathe faster is strong.

Doctors will measure breathing rates when assessing this condition. Normal adults breathe at about 12-18 breaths per minute when they are not thinking about it. In pneumonia the rate rises, sometimes markedly. (Note: these are adult rates. Young children breathe much faster than adults.)

If you think that you or someone you know have symptoms like this you should seek urgent medical help by telephone. You can call 105 or the relevant number for your region.

If you are too breathless to talk to someone on the phone, or your breathing is becoming rapidly harder and faster at rest, call 105 or get someone to do it for you.

In severe COVID-19:

1. You are noticeably breathless and you can do very little.
2. You may be breathless, even when sitting still.
3. You may be unable to complete a sentence when speaking.

4. You may feel you are having to work hard to breathe.
5. Your chest, tummy or back hurts when you breathe.
6. Your temperature is high.
7. Your chest is tight, as if you can't expand it properly.
8. You can't keep up with your breathing, as if you had just sprinted hard (except you haven't).
9. You are not eating or drinking normally.
10. You can't read or watch TV because you are too focused on breathing or feel too unwell.
11. Others think you are confused.

Other common symptoms of COVID-19 pneumonia include (and you do not have to have all or even most of them):

1. Rapid and shallow breathing.
2. Rapid heartbeat.
3. Unwell appearance.
4. Lowered blood pressure.

You need to be treated in hospital urgently.

You should call 105 or the relevant emergency number for your region immediately if you think you or someone you know have the symptoms of severe or critical COVID-19. Inform the call handler that you think you have coronavirus or COVID-19 symptoms.

Health Education:



Stay home except to get medical care:

- **Stay home.** Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas and do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.
- **Take care of yourself.** Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you have trouble breathing, or have any other [emergency warning signs](#), or if you think it is an [emergency](#).
- **Avoid public transportation**, ride-sharing, or taxis if possible.



Get tested:

- If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), get [tested](#). While [waiting for test results](#) [pdf icon](#)[233 KB, 2 Pages], stay away from others, including staying apart from those living in your household.
- **Get tested as soon as possible after your symptoms start.** Treatments may be available for people with COVID-19 who are at risk for becoming very sick. Don't delay: Treatment must be started early to be effective—some treatments must begin within 5 days of your first symptoms. **Contact your healthcare provider right away if your test result is positive to determine if you are eligible.**
- [Self-tests](#) are one of several options for [testing for the virus that causes COVID-19](#) and may be more convenient than laboratory-based tests and point-of-care tests. Ask your healthcare provider or your local health department if you need help interpreting your test results.

- You can visit your [state](#), [tribal](#), [local](#)^{external icon}, and [territorial health department's website](#) to look for the latest local information on testing sites.



Separate yourself from other people:

As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people and pets in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a well-fitting [mask](#).

Tell your close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. By letting your [close contacts](#) know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect everyone.

- See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) if you have questions about pets.
- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you. [Answer the call](#) to slow the spread.



Monitor your symptoms:

- [Symptoms](#) of COVID-19 include **fever, cough, or other symptoms**.
- **Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department.** Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

When to seek emergency medical attention

Look for **emergency warning signs*** for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 105 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.



Call ahead before visiting your doctor:

- **Call ahead.** Many medical visits for routine care are being postponed or done by phone or telemedicine.
- **If you have a medical appointment that cannot be postponed, call your doctor's office,** and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.



If you are sick, wear a well-fitting mask:

- **You should wear a [mask](#)** if you must be around other people or animals, including pets (even at home).
- Wear a [mask](#) with the best fit, protection, and comfort for you.
- You don't need to wear the mask if you are alone. If you can't put on a mask (because of trouble breathing, for example), cover your coughs

and sneezes in some other way. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from other people. This will help protect the people around you.

- Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2 years, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is not able to remove the mask without help.



Cover your coughs and sneezes:

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Throw away used tissues** in a lined trash can.
- **Immediately wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



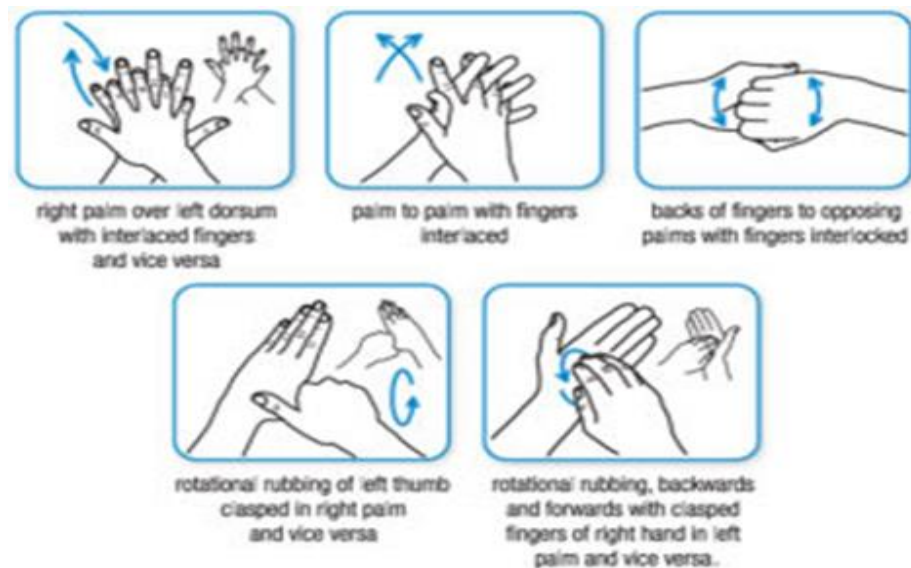
Clean your hands often:

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Use hand sanitizer** if soap and water are not available. 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.
- **Soap and water** are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- [Handwashing Tips](#)



Avoid sharing personal household items:



- **Do not share** dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.
- **Wash these items thoroughly after using them** with soap and water or put in the dishwasher.



Clean surfaces in your home regularly:

- **Clean and disinfect** high-touch surfaces (for example, doorknobs, tables, handles, light switches, and countertops) in your “sick room” and bathroom. In shared spaces, you should clean and disinfect surfaces and items after each use by the person who is ill.
- **If you are sick and cannot clean**, a caregiver or other person should only clean and disinfect the area around you (such as your bedroom and bathroom) on an as needed basis. Your caregiver/other person

should wait as long as possible (at least several hours) and wear a mask before entering, cleaning, and disinfecting shared spaces that you use.

- **Clean and disinfect areas that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.**
- **Use household cleaners and disinfectants.** Clean visible dirty surfaces with household cleaners containing soap or detergent. Then, use a household disinfectant.
 - Use a product from [EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)[external icon](#)
 - Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with a disinfectant for a certain period of time (look at "contact time" on the product label).
 - You may also need to wear personal protective equipment, such as gloves, depending on the directions on the product label.
 - Immediately after disinfecting, [wash your hands](#) with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - For completed guidance on cleaning and disinfecting your home, visit [Complete Disinfection Guidance](#).



Take steps to improve ventilation at home:

- [Improve ventilation \(air flow\) at home](#) to help prevent from spreading COVID-19 to other people in your household.
- **Clear out COVID-19 virus particles in the air** by opening windows, using air filters, and turning on fans in your home.
- **Use [this interactive tool](#)** to learn how to improve air flow in your home.