



Coronavirus Disease 2019

COVID-19

Resources for Older Adults and Their Families

Note: CDPHE aims to share the most accurate information available at the current time. Please check back frequently for updates and visit [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Colorado](#) for the most current news on COVID-19 in Colorado.

What Older Adults and Families Need to Know about COVID-19

COVID-19 is the name of a new respiratory illness spreading from person to person in many countries and states, including Colorado. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Not all coronaviruses are COVID-19.

You can find more general information about COVID-19 and other frequently asked questions by following this link: [COVID-19 CDPHE FAQ](#)

Protecting people at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19

Community transmission is increasing across the state. We fully expect and are actively planning for widespread community transmission in the weeks ahead. Our priority is keeping the people of our state safe. We are urging all Coloradans to exercise personal responsibility to protect public health. Everyone's daily preventive actions are important in reducing spread to those who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including:

- Older people (over age 60), especially those over 80 years.
- People who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease, or diabetes.
- Older people with chronic medical conditions are at greatest risk.

Since COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about the virus, the current understanding about how it spreads is largely based on what is known about similar respiratory illnesses.

According to early data shared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in an interview with AARP ([Coronavirus and Older Adults: Your Questions Answered](#)), older adults are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness 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.

Reducing exposure to pathways by which the disease is spreading is especially important for people at higher risk for serious illness. People at higher risk should stay at home as much as possible while there is an outbreak in their community and pay extra attention to preventive measures like staying away from sick people, washing hands frequently, and avoiding crowds. Reach out to others if you need something.

Protecting Yourself and Your Loved Ones From COVID-19...through everyday actions

- Frequently and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or use your inner elbow or sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

- Clean surfaces in your home, and personal items such as cell phones, using regular household products.

...through social distancing

- Stay home if you're sick. Ask family, friends, and service providers not to visit while they are sick.
- Don't shake hands. Instead, greet people by bumping elbows, waving, or just saying "hi."
- When possible, increase distance between people to six feet to help reduce spread.
- Postpone unnecessary travel. - [Follow CDC guidelines on travel.](#)
- Stay home and avoid crowds while there is an outbreak in your community. Avoid putting yourself in a situation—whatever that might be—that might increase the risk given your situation.
- Stay connected with loved ones by phone and online. Reach out to people if you need something. Consider if there are ways to attend meetings by phone or online.

...by being prepared

- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications, food, and supplies in case you need to stay home for prolonged periods of time.
- Make a plan with your network about
 - how to check in with each other.
 - how others can deliver supplies so you can avoid crowds.
 - how others can assist you with medical equipment or other needs in an emergency.

..by staying informed

- Know where you can get information about community spread and public health actions in your area. Share accurate information with neighbors, friends and co-workers, especially people who may have difficulty receiving or understanding the information.
- COHELP is the public health information line for frequently asked questions about COVID-19.
 - Call 1-877-462-2911 for answers in many languages including English, Spanish (Español), Mandarin (普通话), and more
 - Email COHELP@RMPDC.org (answers in English only).
- Colorado's webpage for COVID-19: colorado.gov/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus
- Facebook (facebook.com/CDPHE) and Twitter (@CDPHE)
- CDC web page cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

A note about scams and price gouging

Cyber attackers and others try to take advantage of events that draw a lot of media, like the COVID-19 outbreak. They aim to prey on our fears. Beware messages that do any of the following

- Messages that communicate a tremendous **sense of urgency**. The bad guys are trying to rush you into making a mistake.
- Messages that **pressure you** into bypassing or ignoring our security policies and procedures.
- Messages that **promote miracle cures**, such as vaccines or medicine that will protect you. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Messages **asking for personal information** from people or addresses that you don't recognize, even if they **pretend to be an healthcare official or government organization**.

Read more here:

- [HERE'S HOW SENIORS CAN AVOID COVID-19 SCAMS](#)
- [Coronavirus Scams: What the FTC is doing](#)

Community Resources and Guidance

It is normal to be scared, sad, or angry when there is a new infectious disease outbreak in our communities. Fear is a natural response to the unknown, and we are still figuring out how COVID-19 will affect our families and our communities. Colorado Crisis Services is available 24/7/365 if you need to talk. Call 1-844-493-8255.

The Colorado Department of Human Services has shared resources to help support people of Colorado on their webpage: [Colorado Department of Human Services](#)

On this webpage, links are provided to help people

- Find services for older adults
- Apply for cash assistance (TANF)
- Apply for child care assistance
- Apply for employment assistance
- Apply for energy assistance (LEAP)
- Apply for food assistance (SNAP)
- Apply for disability assistance (DDS)

If you are looking for other services such as caregiver support, nutrition services, transportation, in-home services, care coordination and outreach, contact your local [Area Agency on Aging](#)

2-1-1 is a confidential and multilingual service connecting people to vital resources across the state. No matter where you live in Colorado, you can find information about resources in your local community. Dial 2-1-1 or (866) 760-6489 toll free. They also have a webpage for COVID-19 resources:

<https://www.211colorado.org/covid-19/>

Families of loved ones with dementia can find 24/7 support from the Alzheimer's Association helpline at 800-272-3900.

How others can support older Coloradans

Practicing social distancing isn't necessarily about protecting yourself, it's about protecting people who are at the highest risk to get very sick from COVID-19. If you don't get sick, you can't pass it on to others who may experience more severe illness, including your parents or grandparents. We all need to champion social distancing and other healthy behaviors where we live, work, and play.

Make plans to support one another

- how you will check in with each other.
- what supplies people need and how they can be delivered so those at higher risk of serious illness can avoid crowds.
- how to assist others with medical equipment or other needs in an emergency
- consider alternatives should services such as respite, adult day care be modified for COVID-19

The Alzheimer's Association has created a [webpage](#) for dementia caregiving during COVID-19 with more ideas for caregiving in assisted living and at home, as well as staying healthy.

Many caregivers in Colorado are family members. Caring for yourself is a priority so you can continue to support your loved ones.

Routine and Connection is Important

Maintaining connections and routine is important to our well-being and sense of control during emergencies. It is also very important that if you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 that you take extra measures to put distance between yourself and other people to further reduce your risk of being exposed to this new virus.

Both routine and connection can be maintained even when we are social distancing. It may look and feel different than what we do normally, but hopefully we can find practices that support our needs and protect everyone from the disease. Distancing our bodies doesn't mean we have to totally cut off contact with other people. Keep 6 feet apart. Use technology to connect with others.

If going out has been part of older adults' routines, especially for staying connected, it is important to ask how to still be successful in staying connected, while staying away from crowds and maintaining social distancing.

- Check store schedules. Many offer special social distancing shopping hours for older adults.
- Maintain good routines for sleep, healthy eating, and exercise.
- Check-in with your friends and family by phone each day.
- Make a plan with your neighborhood or faith group, by which people can signal they need support.
- Schedule a time for everyone to watch the same movie or TV show at their own homes. Discuss it by phone the next day.
- Set times when you go for a walk, read a book, or learn something new.

To share an idea from other public health colleagues, we want social distancing, not social isolation.