



If you need assistance finding food, paying housing bills, accessing free childcare, or other essential services, use the search bar above to find your local 211 or dial 211 to speak to someone who can help.

The COVID-19 situation in the United States is evolving rapidly as more becomes known about the virus, how it is spread, and how it effects people. **For the most accurate and timely information, visit the [CDC's website](#)** or monitor CDC social media channels. This page is being kept up-to-date as regularly as possible with answers to the most common questions 211s receive.

If you are looking for guidance about how to respond as a school administrator, non-profit or faith-based organization staff member, business owner, or event planner, the CDC has provided detailed information for different sectors [here](#).

**If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911 immediately.**

**On this page:**

- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 and the outbreak](#)
- [Resources available to those impacted](#)
- [How the 211 network is responding](#)

## **Want to help?**

Please consider donating to your local 211 agency directly, local United Way or community fund.

To support the entire 211 network and communities most in need, please consider donating to the [\*\*United Way National COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund.\*\*](#)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is COVID-19?**

There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

The World Health Organization (WHO) published [this video](#) which helps answer many common questions about the origin and spread of the virus.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Fever, cough, and shortness of breath are the most common symptoms of COVID-19 and are similar to symptoms of a common cold or the flu.

Symptoms such as chills, body aches, and a runny nose are more likely associated with the flu, not COVID-19. But you should contact your healthcare provider or telemedicine service provided by your health insurer to get medical guidance.

### **What should I do if I or someone I care for is sick?**

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, are over the age of 60, or have an underlying medical condition like heart, lung, or kidney disease, and develop a

fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider immediately. If you are young, otherwise healthy, and have not been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 or recently traveled to a country with a high rate of COVID-19, contact your medical provider and follow their guidance. Where COVID-19 tests are limited, people who are otherwise healthy may be asked to stay home and monitor their symptoms rather than seek in-person care.

*[More information from the CDC here.](#)*

### **Is COVID-19 fatal?**

While people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. and abroad, the majority of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 do recover. The virus appears to only be severe if it reaches the lungs and remains untreated. Most otherwise healthy people can recover from COVID-19 at home.

### **Are there confirmed COVID-19 cases in my community?**

Most states in the U.S. have confirmed at least one case of COVID-19 and are taking necessary precautions to slow the spread. CDC has made [a map](#) available to the public with information about confirmed COVID-19 cases by state. For specific information about your community, visit the website for [your state health department](#) and look for COVID-19 updates. Regardless of whether there is an active outbreak in your community, you should wash your hands thoroughly, cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing, and stay home and away from large gatherings of people if possible. If experiencing you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, and shortness of breath), contact your medical provider for guidance.

### **Who is at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19?**

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.

There is not currently information from published scientific reports about susceptibility of pregnant women to COVID-19. Pregnant women experience immunologic and physiologic changes which might make them more susceptible to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

There is no evidence that children are more susceptible to COVID-19. In fact, most confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported from China have occurred in adults. Infections in children have been reported, including in very young children. There is an ongoing investigation to determine more about this outbreak.

*[More information about risk from the CDC available here.](#)*

### **How does the virus spread?**

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact (within 6 feet) with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest) but some spread might be possible before people show symptoms.

It may also be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

*[More information about transmission from the CDC here.](#)*

### **Should I keep my children home from school or avoid going to work?**

You should follow guidance from your specific school district and employer about closures. Many school districts are closing schools temporarily to facilitate deep cleaning and to monitor the situation, and many businesses have asked workers who can do so to work from home.

### **Should I cancel my travel plans?**

Federal officials are increasingly limiting travel to and from countries outside the United States to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19. The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to reconsider travel abroad at this time due to the global impact of COVID-19. If you have a trip planned, [check the CDC's site](#) for a risk assessment of your destination and follow guidance provided about self-quarantining upon return. If you travel, take the same precautions you would while home to avoid getting sick or spreading germs including washing your hands thoroughly and often and avoiding contact with sick people. If you are returning or have returned from traveling abroad, visit the [State Department's website](#) detailing requirements by origin country.

### **Should I cancel my event or gathering?**

The [CDC issued guidance on March 15, 2020](#) that individuals and organizations should reschedule events with 50 or more people until mid-May. Gatherings of any size should be reconsidered unless organizers can protect vulnerable people, ensure proper hand hygiene and social distancing. This guidance is resulting in more school and workplace closures and, in some states and cities, closing of restaurants and other public spaces.

### **I saw an ad for a vaccine-- are vaccines available for COVID-19?**

Ignore online offers for vaccinations. There currently are no vaccines, pills, potions, lotions, lozenges or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) — online or in stores. Public health officials and the FDA are working closely with drug developers to develop and test COVID-19 vaccinations and treatments but none are available to the public yet.

## **How can I help?**

The most helpful thing people can do is take extra precautions to avoid spreading germs. This includes thoroughly washing hands with warm water for at least 20 seconds, disinfecting common surfaces, covering your mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing, avoid unnecessary contact such as shaking hands or giving high-fives, and staying home and away from others if sick.

## **AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

### **Health Insurance and Medical Expenses**

If you have health insurance, visit the website for your provider or contact their customer support line with any questions about coverage for COVID-19 testing and treatment. Many healthcare insurers are also making telemedicine available to customers for low or no cost.

If you do not have health insurance, you may be eligible for benefits through your state. [Visit this website](#) to explore options based on your household income, children in the home, and state.

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, and shortness of breath) and are concerned that you cannot afford to seek treatment or a test, contact your medical provider or the nearest Urgent Care facility to seek guidance. Free testing for COVID-19 is becoming available in many places, but medical care may still incur a charge. Be sure to ask questions about cost if you seek medical care or treatment.

### **Home Internet Access**

If you do not have internet access at home, or cannot afford to maintain it, but need internet for work or school, there are several options available through providers:

- [Comcast Internet Essentials](#), a low-cost home internet package for qualifying individuals and households, is now available for free for the first two months.
- [Access from AT&T](#) is a low-cost home internet package for qualifying individuals and households (no special for COVID-19 but still available at a low cost)

Additionally, many internet providers have announced that they are waiving late payment fees, increasing caps on internet speeds, and will not disconnect customers for not paying monthly bills on time. If you have questions or concerns about your internet connection, contact your provider or visit their website for more information.

### **Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans for Small Businesses**

SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance for a small business. To learn more about the process for accessing SBA's COVID-19 disaster relief lending, please go here. For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

### **Unemployment Benefits**

The U.S. Department of Labor issued guidance for state unemployment insurance programs to extend benefits to individuals whose employment status is impacted by COVID-19. [Use this tool](#) to find the agency that manages unemployment insurance in your state and visit their website for more information about eligibility and how to apply for benefits.

### **Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Employees are eligible to take FMLA leave if they work for a covered employer and:

- have worked for their employer for at least 12 months

- have at least 1,250 hours of service over the previous 12 months
- **and** work at a location where at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

Employers are required to give eligible FMLA workers up to 12 weeks of job-protected (but not necessarily paid) leave if they are sick, including with complications from the flu or a similar illness **and/or** they need to care for an immediate family member (children, spouse, parents) who are ill. Visit [this Department of Labor resource](#) for more information.

### **Mortgage, Rent, and Utilities Payment Assistance**

At this time there is no nation-wide resource available to assist with mortgage or rent payments. Some localities have announced that no eviction-notices will be served temporarily. Additionally, some localities have announced that they will temporarily reinstate or not shut off utilities, most oftentimes water, due to non-payment.

Be sure to follow local news, radio, and official social media profiles to learn the latest in your community.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps**

All of USDA's programs, including SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, have flexibilities and contingencies built-in to allow us to respond to on-the-ground realities and take action as directed by Congress. Legislation is currently being considered in Congress.

### **Food Assistance**

Contact your local 211 or search for your local 211 using the search bar above for more information about food pantries and food distribution sites.



## Relief for “Gig Economy” Workers and Contractors

At this time there is no nation-wide resource available to assist with “gig economy” or service industry workers. Some states and localities may have funds or relief packages to assist those impacted. Stay tuned in to local news, radio, and official social media profiles to learn the latest in your state and community.

## Mental Health and Crisis

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. [Visit this CDC page](#) to learn more about things you can do to support yourself and your loved ones. If you need to talk to someone, these resources are confidential and available for free 24/7:

- Call 1-800-273-8255 for the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- Text HOME to 741-741 for [Crisis Text Line](#)
- Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66-746 for the [Disaster Distress Hotline](#)
- Call 1-866-488-7386, text START to 678-678 or [click here to chat](#) with [The Trevor Project](#) (for LGBTQ youth)
- Call 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22-522 to connect with [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#).

## HOW IS 211 INVOLVED IN THE COVID-19 RESPONSE?

All 211 providers across the United States and Canada are operational and continue to connect people with services and resources in their local communities, including people who are in need of financial or other assistance as

a result of lost wages from event cancellations, business closures, and quarantines.

Additionally, many 211s are working closely with state and local health officials to provide up-to-date information to the general public about the virus and outbreak. If you live in one of these states and have questions or need help related to COVID-19, you can call 211 or visit your local 211's website by using the search bar at the top of this page, <http://211.org/services/covid19> :

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Connecticut
- Hawaii
- Iowa
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wisconsin

**Remember if you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.**