



COVID-19 TIP SHEET

for Older Adults and People with Higher Risk of Serious Illness and their Caregivers and Family

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

Evidence has shown that certain people are at higher risk of becoming sicker or seriously ill with COVID-19.

This includes:

- Older adults (60 years old and up)
- People with serious chronic medical conditions such as:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease
 - Asthma
 - Sickle cell disease
- People with compromised immune systems
- People with neurological or neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions
- Women currently pregnant or pregnant within the last two weeks

The following information will help you be prepared at home if an outbreak occurs in your community.

- Have [supplies](#) and medications available so that you will not need to go to the drug store to obtain routine prescriptions or consider using mail-order pharmacy for prescriptions.
- Be sure to have extra over the counter medicines and medical supplies to treat fevers and other symptoms.
- Have enough household items and food on hand to last for an extended period of time (at least two weeks).
- Remain at home as much as possible.

Personal protective measures can be taken by everyone including:

- Avoid close contact with sick persons.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, use alcohol-based hand cleaner (60%) if no soap and water is available.
- To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your cough. Consider avoiding handshakes.
- Avoid touching your face, nose and eyes.
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks & cell phones).
- Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Your risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are people in the crowd who are sick.
- Stay home as much as possible.

- Avoid all non-essential travel including plane trips, and especially avoid embarking on [cruise ships](#).
- If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, take extra measures to put distance of at least six feet between yourself and other people to further reduce your risk of being exposed to this new virus.
- Consider ways of getting food brought to your house through family, social, or commercial networks. Older adults (60+) can [contact](#) their local Area on Aging for assistance.

Have a [plan for if you get sick](#):

- **It is always best to work with your healthcare provider on any issues related to your health.** Additional information is available at the CDC: [Recommended precautions for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a nonhealthcare setting](#)
- Stay in touch with others by phone or email. You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
- Determine who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick. Have a backup plan.

Symptoms or Warning Signs to be aware of:

- Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
- If you develop warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults, warning signs*:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion or inability to arouse
 - Bluish lips or face
- If you need emergency services, call 9-1-1 and communicate your symptoms to the operator.

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

How caregivers and families can support:

- Know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan to facilitate continued delivery.
- Stock up on non-perishable food items to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.
- Follow guidance regarding visitation limits if issued by facilities.
- Establish a regular check in system with those you are close to in order to monitor their health and needs.

Community Agencies can find additional information on how to support vulnerable populations by:

- Staying up to date on current information and recommendations by checking the michigan.gov/coronavirus website and the CDC.gov/coronavirus website.
- Developing processes for checking in with clients who may be at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Determining how to meet the needs of clients who rely on congregate meals, for example transitioning to a meal delivery program.

- Educate home care services what to be aware of that may require additional support for their clients. This may include staff modification, personal protective equipment or the use of technology to support communications and evaluation of clients.