

# Steps to Prevent Illness

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

**The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

## Take steps to protect yourself



### Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.



### Avoid close contact

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).

## Take steps to protect others



### Cover coughs and sneezes/ Stay home if you're sick

- **Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



### Wear a facemask if you are sick

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.
- **If you are NOT sick:** You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.



### Clean and disinfect

- **Clean AND disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#) daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.