

# 5 Steps to Prepare for COVID-19

Infectious disease experts say most cases of COVID-19 are mild to moderate, like the common cold. But it can be more severe in older adults and people with chronic health conditions.

There are simple steps you can take to help protect yourself and your family.

## #1 Make a plan

Create plans for school, work and home.

- Make a list of people and organizations who can help if you become sick. Consider: family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health care providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, health care services, and other resources like mental health services.
- Join a neighborhood website or social media page to stay connected to neighbors, information, and resources.
- Plan ways to care for family members at risk for serious complications, such as older people and people with chronic health conditions.

## #2 Prepare as you would for a winter storm

There is no need to buy large quantities of supplies. But it's a good idea to pick up a few extra items each time you go to the market or pharmacy. That way, you're prepared and can avoid crowds.

- Pick up some extra foods like canned goods, dry pasta, and peanut butter.
- Have soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, fever reducers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen on hand.

## # 3 Get ready for possible changes in daily schedules

### At School:

- Make plans to care for your children if schools are closed temporarily. Just like you would for snow days.
- Make plans for alternate after-school care in case they are closed temporarily.

### At work:

- Ask to work from home or take leave if you or someone in your household gets sick, or if your child's school is temporarily closed.

## #4 Stay informed:

- Stay connected on your state and local health department's social media pages and websites for timely and accurate COVID-19 information.

- Be aware of false information circulating on the internet. Accurate and up-to-date information is available from the State Health Department at [www.health.ny.gov/coronavirus](http://www.health.ny.gov/coronavirus) or its hotline at 1-888-364-3065, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website and social media platforms at [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)
- If you live alone and become sick, you may need to ask for help. If you have a chronic disease and live alone, ask your friends, family, and health care providers to check on you.
- If you decide to attend a public event, practice good health habits.
  - Try to keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and others at the event.
  - Avoid close contact, such as shaking hands, hugging, and kissing.
  - Wash hands often or use a hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
  - Avoid surfaces that are touched often, such as doorknobs and handrails.

## #5 Prevent the spread of colds, flu *and* COVID-19

### Everyone should:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before you eat.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue and discard in a closed container.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Keep a distance of at least 6 feet to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

### For people who are sick:

- Stay home.
- If you have a fever, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen.
- Keep sick household members away from others. If you have a separate room that is best.
- Use soap and water, a bleach and-water solution, or EPA-approved household products. You can make your own cleanser with a mixture of 1 cup of liquid unscented chlorine bleach in 5 gallons of water.
- Avoid sharing personal items.
- Anyone at high risk for complications should talk to their health care provider for more information.