

About COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health
A division of Cook County Health

**BUILDING
HEALTHIER
COMMUNITIES**



About COVID

COVID is an infectious disease caused by a virus that infects the lungs and breathing passages, such as the nose, mouth, and throat. It can cause mild to severe respiratory illness, including dry cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, fever, diarrhea, head and body aches, and loss of taste and/or smell.

Who is most at risk for COVID?

Anyone can get COVID. People at increased risk of severe COVID illness and complications, including hospitalization and even death, include: People ages 65 years or older, those who are unvaccinated or not up to date on their COVID vaccinations, and people with certain medical conditions.

How does COVID spread?

A person with COVID can spread the virus when they cough, sneeze, or speak with others from a close distance. COVID is more likely to spread in poorly ventilated areas and crowded indoor settings. Less commonly, you can also catch COVID if you touch a surface contaminated with the virus and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.

How is COVID prevented?

Staying up to date with the latest COVID vaccine is the most effective and safe way to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, or death due to COVID infection.

What should I do if I have COVID symptoms?

COVID symptoms mimic symptoms of the flu and other viruses. Anyone with COVID symptoms should get tested. If you have contracted COVID, you can stop spreading it to other people by staying home and away from others until all of your symptoms improve and you are fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

Protect yourself and others against COVID.
Find a vaccination clinic near you. Scan the QR code at right.

WALK-INS WELCOME • NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED • FREE TO **EVERYONE**
REGARDLESS OF INSURANCE • AGES 6 MONTHS & OLDER

Who should get a COVID shot?

Everyone ages 6 months and older should get the updated COVID vaccine to protect against severe infection, per the Illinois Department of Public Health Immunization Recommendations for the 2025-26 Respiratory Virus Season.

The COVID vaccine is recommended for:

- All children 6-23 months.
- Children ages 2-17 years old with at least one risk factor or a weakened immune system, or if requested by parent or guardians.
- Adults ages 18 years and older.
- Pregnant people, including after delivery and during breastfeeding.

**CHECK THE
SCHEDULE**



COVID Symptoms

COVID symptoms may include:

- Fever or feeling feverish
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea



Treating COVID-19



Treatment Options

- If you think you have COVID, testing can help you decide what to do next.
- COVID antiviral medications may help lessen symptoms, shorten your illness, and reduce the risk of some complications. They work best when taken as soon as possible (especially if you are at increased risk serious illness) or within 5-7 days of when symptoms first begin to appear.



Managing Symptoms

- Most people have mild illness and recover at home.
- Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help reduce fever and body aches.
- Stay away from others to avoid spreading COVID.



Call your health care provider or go to urgent care or the ER if you:

- Have trouble breathing
- Have chest pain
- Have new confusion
- Are unable to wake or stay awake
- Or if lips, nail beds or skin appear pale, gray or blue (depending on skin tone)