

STAY SAFE AT HOME

Tips for older adults from Public Health-Seattle & King County



IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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COVID-19 in King County

COVID-19 is spreading in King County. But together, we can slow it down, saving lives. Everyone, young and old, should stay home and avoid all non-essential contact.

When you must go out, limit your trips and stay six feet apart from others. Our individual actions affect the health of our entire community. And what we do as a community protects us all.

Stay home and slow the spread.

How to care for yourself or others with COVID-19

This is information to help you take care of yourself or someone in your home if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

Pay close attention to the symptoms

Consult with a doctor on the phone if the sick person is 60 years or older or is at risk for severe illness because of a medical condition (such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or a weakened immune system). If you do not have a doctor, call the King County COVID-19 call center at 206-477-3977.

Watch for signs of a medical emergency

Call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room if the sick person:

- has trouble breathing,
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest,
- if the sick person is unusually confused or doesn't respond to you,
- has a blue or purple tint to their lips or face.

Provide comfort

Choose one person in the household to be the main caretaker so that others in the household are not exposed to the virus. It's important that the sick person gets plenty of rest. Help the sick person feel more comfortable. You can use over-the-counter medications like Tylenol, Advil, or aspirin to help with fever, sore throat and body aches. Follow any instructions from your doctor.

Prevent dehydration

It's important for the sick person to drink plenty of liquids like water, broth, herbal tea, or juice. Offer small amounts of liquid frequently, even if they do not feel thirsty. If the sick person is not eating solid food, give drinks that contain sugar and salt, such as Pedialyte, broth or sports drinks like Gatorade (diluted half and half with water). The sick person should not drink alcohol, caffeinated or diet drinks. Do not use tobacco. If someone is weak or unresponsive, they may be dehydrated. If they are unresponsive, call 9-1-1 or go to an emergency room. **Signs of dehydration: weakness, dry mouth and tongue, produce less urine, dark colored urine.**



Watch out for

Common symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing

Or at least 2 of the following:

- Fever (higher than 100°F)
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell

This list is not all inclusive

Consult with your doctor on the phone if you are sick

If you are unsure of how to care for yourself or are concerned about your condition, call your health care provider for advice.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the household

Tips for cleaning and laundry

Clean surfaces that you frequently touch every day with soap and water or other standard cleaning products. This includes countertops, door knobs, handles, and buttons on TV remotes and sink faucets. After scrubbing surfaces clean use a disinfecting cleaner like bleach wipes, bleach spray or other disinfectant spray.

If you cannot find disinfecting cleaner, use a paper towel dipped in rubbing alcohol. The alcohol will kill the virus.

Wash laundry thoroughly using the warmest temperature possible.

Keep the dirty laundry away from your body.

Wash your hands immediately after handling laundry.



Living in a multigenerational household

When there are multiple people in the household, there can be additional risk for older relatives who are more vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19.

If you have older adults living at home, or family members with medical conditions, take the following steps to protect them from possible infection:

If you have to go outside the home

Take these steps to protect yourself and prevent carrying the virus into your home:

- Wear a cloth mask which covers your mouth and nose.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Carry hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes with you so that you can disinfect surfaces before you touch them or sanitize your hands.
- Travel alone, if possible. Try not to bring children with you. They are more likely to touch things in public and could carry those germs back to your home.

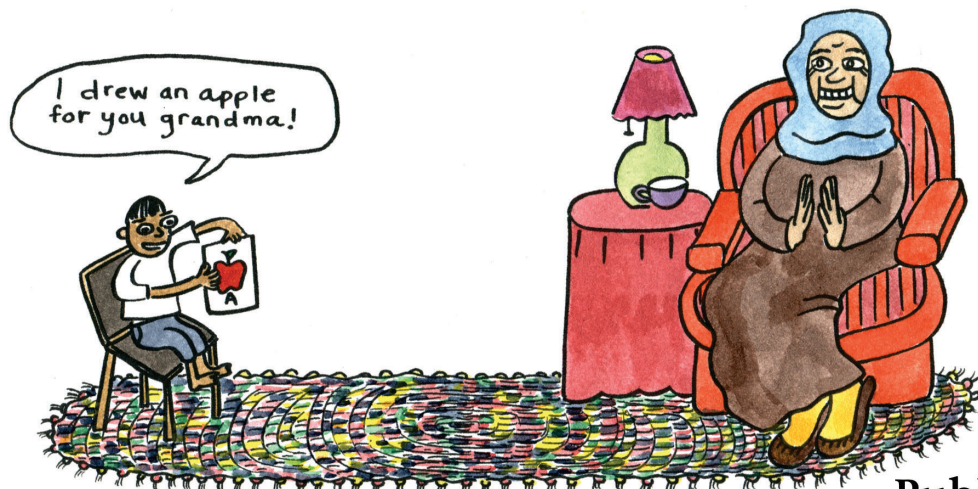
If you are an essential worker

Before leaving work, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When returning home from work, change your clothes and shoes and wash your hands, especially if you've had any interaction with others. Children who go to childcare should take the same steps.



Inside the home

If you are exposed to coronavirus, you might not know it. So even inside your home, it is important to maintain social distancing as best you can. If possible, spend time in separate rooms from vulnerable family members. If you cannot separate, try to stay 6 feet away from vulnerable family members when in the same room.



Providing care

If you are the primary caregiver for an older adult in your home, and you help them with daily activities like bathing and getting dressed, take extra precaution by:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before providing care.
- Wear a cloth face covering when providing care. Cloth face coverings should be worn by you and the person receiving care.
- If you use towels and wash cloths, make sure to use clean ones each time.



Preparing and sharing meals

- Wash your hands before, during, and after preparing food.
- Wash utensils and surfaces after each use.
- Cook foods to a high enough temperature to kill germs that can make you sick or give you food poisoning.
- During meals, try to maintain 6 feet of distance between family members.
- If prayer is part of your family's mealtime routine, pray without holding hands.

Practice healthy habits

Every family member should practice healthy habits so they don't get sick and expose vulnerable members of the household.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or a sleeve.

Enjoy Time Together

Despite the challenges of this outbreak, living with older family members has so many benefits, including keeping strong bonds across generations. Finding safe ways to continue to interact and demonstrate your affection for one another is important.



Staying connected while at home

Protecting ourselves and those we love by staying apart is hard. We miss in-person connections and people may struggle with isolation and maintaining mental and physical health. But it is important for older adults to stay at home and away from others right now. People age 60 and over are at higher risk for severe illness and hospitalization.

Here few ways to stay safe and healthy while still connecting with friends and family:



Have a “porch visit” with loved ones without coming into close contact.



Set a time for regular phone calls with family or friends. Share how you're feeling.



Read a story to your grandchildren over a video conferencing app.

Stay active and healthy while at home

It is important for older adults to stay at home and away from others right now. But, while staying home it is important to take care of your mental and physical health.

Here are a few ways to stay active and healthy while staying at home:



Stand on one foot exercise

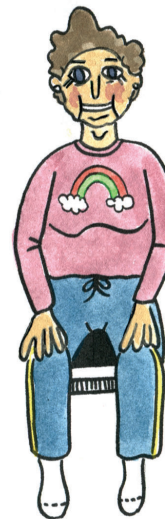


Using soup cans as weights

Get some exercise indoors to maintain strength and balance.



Put right leg over left knee, stretch to left



Rest at center



Put left leg over right knee, stretch to right

Steps for a chair yoga exercise

More ideas:

- At bedtime, practice meditation and thankfulness to combat worry and as an aid in sleeping.
- If you are able to go outside, get exercise and fresh air with a daily walk. It's healthy to be outside for exercise. Just make sure to stay six feet away from others.
- Revisit an old hobby. Get ideas or instructions from YouTube or by searching online.
- Take a break from the news and social media, especially before going to bed. Substitute music for more relaxation!

Resources:

Public Health – Seattle & King County’s COVID-19 information

www.kingcounty.gov/covid

COVID-19 Call Center for medical questions (8 AM-7 PM): 206-477-3977

CDC’s Coronavirus information for Older Adults

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html

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206-684-0660

www.agingkingcounty.org

AARP

<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2020/coronavirus.html>

