The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a great deal of change to our lives. While many things have changed, our commitment to your health and safety is the same as ever.

As we re-engage in daily routines and find our new normal, it’s important to remember we are still living in a world with COVID-19. Until a vaccine is available, we’ll still be seeing cases of COVID-19 crop up in our population.

That means a risk still exists, but no one wants to live in fear. We can help overcome fear and worry by doing everything we can to lessen our risk and that of our loved ones.

We have put together a toolkit to help you navigate this new normal. It includes topics such as:
- Social distancing
- Hand hygiene
- How to use and take care of face masks
- Understanding your risks
- Symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do
- Guidance for the home, workplace, family life, errands, recreation and social activity

We encourage you to stay informed about what’s happening in your state and community, and follow the COVID-19 information put forward by your state’s department of health. National numbers may not reflect what’s happening locally.

As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Avera encourages everyone over age 2 to wear a mask in public settings, especially when social distancing is not possible. A significant number of people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms and can transmit the virus to others without knowing it. Wearing a mask may not feel comfortable or normal, but it is a responsible act of love and respect for our neighbors.

Avera is taking measures in clinics, hospitals and other facilities to ensure that our patients feel safe. Preventive health care and management of chronic conditions continue to be important – even during a pandemic. So please don’t ignore your physical or mental health during this time. We are here for you!

Most services that were put on hold due to COVID-19 have resumed. If you have any questions or concerns about your ongoing health care, please reach out to your primary care provider.

Learn more at Avera.org/covid-19 or Avera.org/dedicated.

Sincerely,

Bob Sutton,
President and CEO, Avera Health
How to Protect Yourself and Others

Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

Know How It Spreads

- 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.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
  - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
  - Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Everyone Should

Wash 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, even inside your home. If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
  - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
  - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.
  - Do not gather in groups.
  - Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
  - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others
- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a health care worker.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes
- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always 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.

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.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.
Limit Close Contact with People

Limit in-person meetings to your direct team, and utilize Webex, phone calls and other tools when possible.

Limit physical contact, including handshakes.

Limit non-essential travel.

Avoid crowds (especially in poorly ventilated spaces).

WASH HANDS AND AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE OR MOUTH

Here’s what social distancing means:

**Limit close contact with people**
- Limit physical contact, including handshakes.
- Avoid hugging or kissing people who are sick or showing symptoms of illness, keep your distance about 6 feet away.
- Limit in-person meetings, using phone, email and other communication tools when possible.
- Increase physical space when you are working or talking with others out in public.

**Stay home if you are sick**
- Stay home from work, school, church or other group gatherings if you are ill with these symptoms:
  - Fever of 100°F or higher
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
  - Sore throat
  - Chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Vomiting or diarrhea

**Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel events**
- Officials may ask you to modify, postpone or cancel large events for the safety and well-being of your event staff, participants and the community.
- If possible, plan alternative ways for participants to enjoy the events by television, radio or online.

**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 sick people in the crowd.
- Maintain at least 6 feet distance.

**Reduce or limit gatherings**
- Consider that now may not be the best time for parties or potlucks.
- Visiting friends and family is not recommended.

**Limit non-essential travel**

To prevent spread of COVID-19 illness, Avera recommends “social distancing” as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
How to Properly Wash Your Hands

Handwashing properly for 20 seconds is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and stop the spread of germs.

How to wash your hands correctly:
- Turn on the faucet to warm water and get your hands wet.
- Turn the water off and put on soap.
- Once you have your soap, create a good lather without water for at least 20 seconds. This is often the step people skip — they wash their hands with the soap under the water when you should be lathering your hands outside of the water first.
- When lathering your hands, scrub the backs, fronts, between the fingers and under your nails. A good song to think of when trying to gauge 20 seconds is “Happy Birthday.” Sing this twice through and you should be close to 20 seconds.
- Turn the water back on and put your hands back under the water to rinse off the soap.
- The final step is BEFORE you turn off the faucet grab your paper towel and dry your hands completely. If there are no paper towels then dry your hands with the air dryer. You will then use the paper towel to shut off the faucet and open the bathroom door to exit before throwing your paper towel in the trash.
- If you don’t have a paper towel try to use your sleeve to open the door to prevent any germs that may be on the bathroom door handle from getting back onto your hands.
- In the event handwashing isn’t a possibility you can use hand sanitizer but this should NEVER be used to replace good hand-washing practices. When using hand sanitizer it should be comprised of at least 60% alcohol; rub in the hand sanitizer until your hands are dry.

You should wash your hands often, including:
- Before, during and after food preparation
- Before eating
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after performing first aid, such as bandaging a cut
- After using the toilet, changing diapers or assisting a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, animal waste or handling their food or treats
- Anytime your hands are physically dirty
- After touching garbage
Wearing a cloth face mask can be helpful in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Whether you have homemade ones or bought some, daily washing can help the masks keep you safer.

Additionally, cloth masks are most beneficial for lessening mouth-hand contact or to help cover a medical mask or N-95 in order extend the life of disposable masks.

**Cloth Masks Best Practices**

- Cloth masks only help if they are carefully put on (donned) and taken off (doffed.)
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, every time you touch the mask. This will really help you avoid cross-contamination.
- When you’re ready to remove a cloth mask, grab one of the ear or head loops.
- Try to avoid touching the front of the mask. Put it in your laundry to be washed – and then wash your hands.
- Wash your cloth mask after each use, or at least daily.
- Wash in hot water, but if you can’t, make sure to dry on a hot setting of your dryer.

**To Don Ear Loop Cloth Mask**

*Proper hand hygiene has been conducted before donning on mask

1. **STEP 1**
   - Hold mask by ear loops

2. **STEP 2**
   - Slip one loop over ear

3. **STEP 3A**
   - Slip second loop over opposite ear, adjust mask to assure mouth and nose covered.

3. **STEP 3B**
   - Slip second loop over opposite ear, adjust mask to assure mouth and nose covered.

Note: Cloth mask tends to slip less during use/talking if the lower edge of mask is aligned with jaw bone (mandible) rather than down below jaw bone.
To Don Ear Head Loop Mask

**STEP 1**
Hold mask by grasping both head loops at edges of mask

**STEP 2A**
Hold mask with mask facing downward, so mask is donned with chin directed into mask first.

**STEP 2B**
Hold mask with mask facing downward, so mask is donned with chin directed into mask first.

**STEP 3A**
Stretch both head loops up over crown head, and adjust loops so mask fits snugly.

**STEP 3B**
Stretch both head loops up over crown head, and adjust loops so mask fits snugly.

---

**When Removing Either Mask for Re-use**

1. Remove mask by grasping ear loops or head loops; avoid touching front of mask.
2. Place mask with outer side facing down on a clean paper towel.
3. If a common area is used for securing masks between uses, write your initials or name on paper towel to designate each person's mask.
4. Perform hand hygiene after removing.
   a. When re-donning, use care not to touch outside of mask.
   b. Perform hand hygiene after donning.

---

**Wash Cloth Masks after Use**

If you wear your mask to work, place it in a plastic bag and take it home to launder

**Wash in regular home laundry:**
- Recommended is to wash in hot water and dry OR
- Wash in cool or warm water but dry in a hot dryer
- Wash mask after each use (or daily)
That does not mean we need to live in fear, but we do need to acknowledge the risk and be intentional in the steps we take to mitigate it – for our own health and for the health and well-being of our neighbors and community.

- **Honestly evaluate your risk.** Do you have any of the risk factors (asthma, diabetes, heart disease, obesity) that make people more vulnerable to COVID-19? Are you over the age of 65? Do you interact with loved ones who are vulnerable due to age or underlying conditions? If the answer is yes, that needs to factor into your decision-making when you evaluate options for social and recreational activities.

- **Stay informed about what’s happening in your community.** Follow the COVID-19 information put forward by your state’s department of health. National numbers may not reflect what’s happening locally.

- **Wear a mask.** A significant number of people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms, and people with COVID-19 who do eventually develop symptoms can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This is why social distancing continues to be key in the fight against COVID-19, and why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends people wear cloth face coverings in public settings. Wearing a mask might not feel comfortable, but it is a responsible act to respect our neighbors.

---

Evaluating and Mitigating Risk in Our New Normal

As we find our new normal and re-engage the routines of day-to-day living, it’s important to remember that we are still living in a world with COVID-19. We are still living in a world with risk.

The information in this toolkit provides general guidance on navigating our new normal. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your primary care provider with questions and concerns. Your health care team is here to walk this journey with you every step of the way.
Slow the Spread of COVID-19

WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS
Symptoms may appear within 2-14 days of exposure to the virus. In the last 14 days, have you noticed these symptoms?

- Shortness of breath
- Fever over 100°F
- Cough
- Muscle pain
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Chills
- Sore throat

CALL BEFORE YOU VISIT.
Call your clinic or 1-877-AT-AVERA (1-877-282-8372)

Get guidance on symptoms  ⚠️ People only tested if screened first

ISOLATE YOURSELF.
Wait for results  | Don’t share items  | Don’t share bathroom or bedroom areas
Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home When Someone Is Sick

Source for this section: CDC

How to clean and disinfect

Clean
- Wear reusable or disposable gloves for routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.
- Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. High-touch surfaces include:
  - Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

Disinfect
- Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant. Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Read EPA's infographic on how to use these disinfectant products safely and effectively.
- Many products recommend:
  - Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label).
  - Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

- Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface.
  - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection, and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening may not be suitable for disinfection.
  - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.
  - To make a bleach solution, mix:
    - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water
    - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
  - Bleach solutions need to be remixed every 24 hours.
  - Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.
  - Read the complete disinfection guidance is available from CDC.
Soft Surfaces
For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs and drapes:

- **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- **Disinfect with an EPA-registered household disinfectant.**
- **Vacuum as usual.**

Electronics
For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls.

- Consider putting a **wipeable cover** on electronics.
- Follow **manufacturer’s instruction** for cleaning and disinfecting.
  - If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.

Laundry
For clothing, towels, linens and other items.

- Launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- **Wear disposable gloves** when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people’s items.
- **Do not shake** dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.

Clean Hands Often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
  - Always wash immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a person who is sick.
- Hand sanitizer: If soap and water are not readily available and hands are not visibly dirty, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- Additional key times to clean hands include:
  - After blowing one’s nose, coughing or sneezing
  - After using the restroom
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - After contact with animals or pets
  - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

**When Someone Is Sick**

**Bedroom and Bathroom**
Keep separate bedroom and bathroom for a person who is sick (if possible).

- The person who is sick should stay separated from other people in the home (as much as possible).
- If you have a separate bedroom and bathroom: Wear disposable gloves and only clean the area around the person who is sick when needed, such as when the area is soiled. This will help limit your contact with the person who is sick.
  - Caregivers can provide personal cleaning supplies to the person who is sick (if appropriate). Supplies include tissues, paper towels, cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants. If they feel up to it, the person who is sick can clean their own space.
- If shared bathroom: The person who is sick should clean and disinfect after each use. If this is not possible, the caregiver should wait as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting.
- The CDC has additional precautions for household members and caregivers if someone is sick.

**Food**

- **Stay separated:** The person who is sick should eat (or be fed) in their room, if possible.
- Wash dishes and utensils using disposable gloves and hot water: Handle any used dishes, cups/glasses, or silverware with gloves. Wash them with soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- Clean hands after taking off gloves or handling used items.

**Trash**

- **Dedicated, lined trash can:** If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the person who is sick. Use disposable gloves when removing garbage bags, and handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands afterwards.
Staying Healthy at Work

A significant number of people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms. People with COVID-19 who do eventually develop symptoms can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. The virus can spread between people who are in close contact with each other, even when someone is not having symptoms.

This is why social distancing is so key in the fight against COVID-19, and why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends people wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing is hard to do – this includes your workplace.

Stay home if you feel sick.

When possible, work virtually.

Wear a mask. The CDC recommends that people wear a cloth facemask to cover their nose and mouth in community settings. This is to protect those around you in the case that you are infected but do not have symptoms.

Distance. Maintain at least 6 feet between you and your coworkers. If you are within 6 feet of a coworker with no other barriers, such as a cubicle wall, wearing a face shield in addition to your mask should be considered.

Wash your hands. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; when soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.

Do not touch your face.

Clean. Frequently wipe down high-traffic surfaces such as doorknobs, chairs, tables and shared equipment such as tools and copy machines.

No sharing. Do not share headsets or other objects near the mouth or nose. Discontinue potlucks. If limiting communal items such as coffee pots, refrigerators and vending machines is not possible, wash your hands after touching communal surfaces.

Breakrooms and restrooms. Maintain at least 6 feet between you and your coworkers. Use shared spaces in shifts, and if this is not possible, consider wearing a face shield in addition to your mask.

Meetings. Maintain at least 6 feet between you and your coworkers. If this is not possible, go virtual or consider wearing a face shield in addition to your mask.
Guidance for Family Life

Continue social distancing and hand hygiene.

Practice Social Distancing
The key to slowing the spread of COVID-19 is to limit contact as much as possible. While school is out, children should not have in-person playdates with children from other households. If children are playing outside their own homes, it is essential that they remain 6 feet from anyone who is not in their own household.

To help children maintain social connections while social distancing, help your children have supervised phone calls or video chats with their friends.

Clean Hands Often
Make sure children practice everyday preventive behaviors, such as washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important if you have been in a public place.

According to AAP, washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water are the preferred method in maintaining proper hand hygiene.

- The goal is to increase hand hygiene as much as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CFOC recommendation is to use soap and water when possible and when there is visible soiling, but hand sanitizer is permissible if soap and water is not available.
- If alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available and will increase the frequency that children and families do hand hygiene, then use it if necessary.
- Remember that alcohol-based hand sanitizer is toxic if ingested and must be kept out of reach of small children. Adult supervision is advised.

Child Care
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day.
- If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Take your child’s temperature before leaving in the morning.

- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.
- Notify your child’s school if your child becomes sick with COVID-19.
- Keep track of school dismissals in your community.

Continuing Education in Summer Months
Source: CDC

Ask About School Meal Services
Check with your school on plans to continue meal services during the school dismissal. Many schools are keeping school facilities open to allow families to pick up meals or are providing grab-and-go meals at a central location.

Help Children Continue Learning

Stay in Touch with Your Child’s School
- Many schools are offering lessons online (virtual learning). Review assignments from the school, and help your child establish a reasonable pace for completing the work. You may need to assist your child with turning on devices, reading instructions and typing answers.
- Communicate challenges to your school. If you face technology or connectivity issues, or if your child is having a hard time completing assignments, let the school know.
Create a Flexible Schedule and Routine for Learning at Home

- Have consistent bedtimes and get up at the same time, Monday through Friday.
- Structure the day for learning, free time, healthy meals and snacks, and physical activity.
- Allow flexibility in the schedule – it’s OK to adapt based on your day.

Consider the Needs and Adjustment Required for Your Child’s Age Group

- The transition to being at home will be different for preschoolers, K-5, middle school students, and high school students. Talk to your child about expectations and how they are adjusting to being at home versus at school.
- Consider ways your child can stay connected with their friends without spending time in person.

Look for Ways to Make Learning Fun

- Have hands-on activities, like puzzles, painting, drawing and making things.
- Independent play can also be used in place of structured learning. Encourage children to build a fort from sheets or practice counting by stacking blocks.
- Practice handwriting and grammar by writing letters to family members. This is a great way to connect and limit face-to-face contact.
- Start a journal with your child to document this time and discuss the shared experience.
- Use audiobooks or see if your local library is hosting virtual or live-streamed reading events.

Clean and Sanitize Toys

- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry. You may also clean in a mechanical dishwasher. Be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child’s mouth, like play food, dishes and utensils.
- Machine washable cloth toys should be used by one individual at a time or should not be used at all. These toys should be laundered before being used by another child.
- Do not share toys with other groups of infants or toddlers, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Place in a dish pan with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for “soiled toys.” Keep dish pan and water out of reach from children to prevent risk of drowning. Washing with soapy water is the ideal method for cleaning. Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.
- Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
General Principles for Talking to Your Children about COVID-19

Source: CDC

Remain calm and reassuring.
Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

Make yourself available to listen and to talk.
Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person’s race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.

Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio or online.
Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

Provide information that is honest and accurate.
• Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
• Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.

Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.
• Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
• Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
• Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities).
• Get children into a handwashing habit.
  • Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
  • If soap and water are not available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and child care facilities.
Grocery Shopping, Take-Out, Banking, Getting Gas, and Doctor Visits

As communities across the United States take steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 by limiting close contact, people are facing new challenges and questions about how to meet basic household needs, such as buying groceries and medicine, and completing banking activities. The following information provides advice about how to meet these household needs in a safe and healthy manner.

Shopping for Food and Other Household Essentials

Stay home if sick:
- Avoid shopping if you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, which include a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

Order online or use curbside pickup:
- Order food and other items online for home delivery or curbside pickup, if possible.
- Only visit the grocery store, or other stores selling household essentials in person when you absolutely need to. This will limit your potential exposure to others and the virus that causes COVID-19.

Protect yourself while shopping:
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
- When you do have to visit in person, go during hours when fewer people will be there (for example, early morning or late night).
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness, find out if the store has special hours for people at higher risk. If they do, try to shop during those hours. People at higher risk for severe illness include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.
- Disinfect the shopping cart; use disinfecting wipes if available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If possible, use touchless payment (pay without touching money, a card or a keypad). If you must handle money, a card or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer right after paying.

Use hand sanitizer:
- After leaving the store, use hand sanitizer.

At home
- When you get home, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Follow food safety guidelines: clean, separate, cook, chill. There is no evidence that food or food packaging has been linked to getting sick from COVID-19.
Accepting Deliveries and Takeout Orders

Limit in-person contact if possible.
- Pay online or on the phone when you order, if possible.
- Accept deliveries without in-person contact whenever possible. Ask for deliveries to be left in a safe spot outside your house (such as your front porch or lobby), with no person-to-person interaction. Otherwise, stay at least 6 feet away from the delivery person.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after accepting deliveries or collecting mail.
- After receiving your delivery or bringing home your takeout food, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- After collecting mail from a post office or home mailbox, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Banking

Bank online whenever possible.
- If you must visit the bank, use the drive-through ATM if one is available. Clean the ATM keyboard with a disinfecting wipe before you use it.
- When you are done, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

Getting Gasoline

Use disinfecting wipes on handles or buttons before you touch them.
- Use disinfecting wipes on handles and buttons before you touch them, if available.
- After fueling, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home or somewhere with soap and water.

Going to the Doctor or Getting Medicine

Talk to your doctor online, by phone or email.
- Use telemedicine, if available, or communicate with your doctor or nurse by phone or email.
- Talk to your doctor about rescheduling procedures that are not urgently needed.

If you must visit in-person, protect yourself and others.
- If you think you have COVID-19, let the office know and follow guidance.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Use disinfecting wipes on frequently touched surfaces such as handles, knobs, touchpads, if available.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while inside and in lines.
- When paying, use touchless payment methods, if possible. If you cannot use touchless payment, sanitize your hands after paying with card, cash or check. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

Limit In-Person Visits to the Pharmacy

- Plan to order and pick up all your prescriptions at the same time.
- If possible, call prescription orders in ahead of time. Use drive-thru windows, curbside services (wait in your car until the prescription is ready), mail-order, or other delivery services. Do the same for pet medicine.
- Check with your doctor and pharmacist to see if you can get a larger supply of your medicines so you do not have to visit the pharmacy as often.
The CDC recommends minimizing non-essential travel and errands as much as possible. If you do have to run errands, follow these tips to protect yourself:

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public. The CDC recommends that people wear a cloth facemask to cover their nose and mouth in community settings. This is to protect those around you in the case that you are infected but do not have symptoms.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If possible, use touchless payment (pay without touching money, a card or a keypad). If you must handle money, a card or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer right after paying.
- Use hand sanitizer.
- After leaving the store, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home or somewhere with soap and water.
Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities

Staying physically active is one of the best ways to keep your mind and body healthy. In many areas, people can visit parks, trails, and open spaces as a way to relieve stress, get some fresh air and vitamin D, stay active, and safely connect with others.

Know before you go. While these facilities and areas can offer health benefits, it is important that you follow the steps below to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

DO
- Visit parks that are close to your home.
- Prepare before you visit.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others (“social distancing”) and take other steps to prevent COVID-19.
- Play it safe around and in swimming pools. Keep space between yourself and others.

DON’T
- Visit parks if you are sick or were recently exposed to COVID-19 within 14 days (follow recommended steps to take if you are sick).
- Visit crowded parks.
- Use playgrounds.
- Participate in organized activities or sports.

Traveling long distances to visit a park may contribute to the spread of COVID-19 as:
- Most travel requires you to stop along the way or be in close contact with others.
- Travel may also expose you to surfaces contaminated with the virus that causes COVID-19.

State or Local Parks
State and local authorities will decide whether parks and other recreational facilities will open. Check with the park in advance to be sure you know which areas or services are open, such as bathroom facilities and concessions, and bring what you need with you.

National Parks
The National Park Service will decide on a park-by-park basis whether a national park will be open. Please check with individual parks for specific details since, in many cases, visitor centers, concessions, and bathroom facilities might be closed.

Beaches or Other Swimming Areas
State and local authorities will decide whether natural bodies of water and beaches or swim areas will be open. Please check with individual beaches or swim areas for specific details.

Do: Stay 6 feet away from others (“social distancing”) and take other steps to prevent COVID-19.

If a park, beach, or recreational facility is open for public use, visiting is OK as long as you practice social distancing and everyday steps such as washing hands often and covering coughs and sneezes.

Follow these actions when visiting a park, beach or recreational facility:
- Stay at least 6 feet from others at all times. This might make some open areas, trails and paths better to use. Do not go into a crowded area.
- Avoid gathering with others outside of your household.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to use if soap and water are not available.

Guidance for Social and Recreational Activity
Source: CDC
Don’t: Use playgrounds
Do not use playgrounds, including water playgrounds, located within local, state, or national parks. Using playgrounds might lead to the spread of COVID-19 because:
- They are often crowded and could easily exceed recommended guidance for gatherings.
- It can be challenging to keep surfaces clean and disinfected.
- The virus can spread when young children touch contaminated equipment and then touch their hands to their eyes, nose, or mouth.

Don’t: Participate in organized activities or sports.
In general, most organized activities and sports such as basketball, baseball, soccer, and football that are held on park fields, open areas, and courts are not recommended. These activities and sports typically require coaches and athletes who are not from the same household or living unit to be in close proximity, which increases their potential for exposure to COVID-19.

Do: Play it safe around and in swimming pools, and keep space between yourself and others
There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the water. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (with chlorine or bromine) of pools should kill COVID-19.

Swimming and other water-related activities are excellent ways to get the physical activity needed for a healthy life. If you are not sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, it is safe to use swimming pools as long as steps are taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19:
- Practice social distancing by staying at least six feet (two meters) from others.
- Avoid large gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Keep your hands clean by washing hands with soap and water, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

Swimming does carry some health risks. Visit CDC’s Healthy Swimming website for information to help you prevent illness and drowning, while having fun and enjoying the health benefits of swimming.

Visiting Movie Theaters
- Consider streaming a movie at home as a first option.
- Maintain a 6-feet distance from other parties at all times.
- Wear a mask.
- Keep at least two seats, or 6 feet, between households.
- Leave every other row empty.

Social Gatherings
- Evaluate the number of attendees expected at the gathering. Will it be possible to maintain a 6-feet distance between you and the other parties?
- Maintain proper social distancing at all times, at least 6-feet.
- Wear a mask.
- Refrain from shaking hands.

Family Gatherings
- Don’t go if you are ill.
- Clean hands often.
  - Best method is to properly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Children should not spend time with older adults and people with serious underlying medical issues.
- If children meet in groups, it can put everyone at risk, due to higher levels of asymptomatic infection.

Attending Religious Services
- At-risk populations are strongly encouraged to continue watching services online.
- Check to see if there’s a separate service or designated area for at-risk members.
- Keep at least two seats, or 6 feet, between households.
- Leave every other row empty.
- Wear a mask.
- Evaluate how certain practices, like singing during worship, are handled.

Visiting the Gym
- Consider exercising outdoors.
- Try to visit the gym during off, or non-peak hours, like early morning or late evening.
- Wear a mask while working out.
- Be extra vigilant about cleaning exercise equipment before and after use.
Travel Recommendations

Cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been reported in all states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease. Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

CDC recommends you **stay home** as much as possible, especially if your trip is not essential, and **practice social distancing** especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness. **Don’t travel if you are sick** or travel with someone who is sick.

Essential Travel (outside your local area)

Some travel may also be essential, like:
- Travel to provide medical or home care to others
- Travel necessary for a job considered an essential service

The following travel recommendations provide advice about how to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19 if you must travel. **Don’t travel if you are sick** or plan to travel with someone who is sick.

Considerations If You Must Travel

CDC recommends you **stay home** as much as possible and avoid close contact, especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness. If you must travel, there are several things you should consider before you go.

**Protect yourself and others during your trip:**
- 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 your hands together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with others.
  - Keep 6 feet of physical distance from others.
  - Avoiding close contact is especially important if you are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Wear a cloth face covering in public.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Pick up food at drive-throughs, curbside restaurant service, or stores. Do not dine in restaurants if that is prohibited by state or local guidance.
Types of Travel

Some types of travel (bus, plane, train) may require sitting next to others for a period of time. Travel may also expose you to new parts of the country with differing levels of community transmission. And, if you’re infected, your travel may put others at risk – along the way, at your destination, and when you return home.

If you must travel, consider the following risks you might face, depending on what type of travel you are planning:

- **Air travel:** Because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights. However, there may be a risk of getting COVID-19 on crowded flights if there are other travelers on board with COVID-19.
- **Bus or train travel:** Sitting or standing within 6 feet of others for a prolonged period of time can put you at risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.
- **Car travel:** The stops you need to make along the way could put you and others in the car with you in close contact with others who could be infected.
- **RV travel:** Traveling by RV means you may have to stop less often for food or bathrooms, but RV travelers typically have to stop at RV parks overnight and other public places to get gas and supplies. These stops may put you and those with you in the RV in close contact with others who could be infected.

State and Local Travel Restrictions or Orders

CDC recommends you stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact, especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness. Staying in temporary accommodations (hotels, motels, and rental properties) may expose you to the virus through person-to-person contact and possibly through contact with contaminated surfaces and objects.

If you must stay in a hotel, motel or rental property:

- Take the same steps you would in other public places – for example, avoid close contact with others, wash your hands often and wear a cloth face covering.
- When you get to your room or rental property, clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, remote controls, toilets and sink faucets.
  - Bring an EPA-registered disinfectant and other personal cleaning supplies, including cloths and disposable gloves.
- Wash any plates, cups, or silverware (other than pre-wrapped plastic) before using.

Road Trips

CDC recommends you stay home as much as possible and practice social distancing, especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness. However, if you must travel, be aware that many businesses (such as restaurants and hotels) may be closed.

Anticipate your needs before you go:

- Prepare food and water for the road. Pack non-perishables in case restaurants and stores are closed.
- Bring any medicines you may need for the duration of your trip.
- Pack a sufficient amount of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and keep it in a place that is readily available.
- Book accommodations in advance if you must stay somewhere overnight.
  - Plan to make as few stops as possible, but make sure you rest when you feel drowsy or sleepy.
  - Bring an EPA-registered disinfectant and other personal cleaning supplies.

Don’t travel if you are sick or plan to travel with someone who is sick.
Frequently Asked Questions

Is it safe to travel to visit family or friends?
CDC recommends you **stay home** as much as possible and **practice social distancing**. Traveling to visit friends and family increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. It is possible for someone to have COVID-19 and spread it to others, even if they have no symptoms. Getting infected may be especially dangerous if you or your loved ones are at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19. People at higher risk for complications need to take **extra precautions**.

Although it can be hard to remain apart from loved ones during challenging or stressful times, try to connect with them in other ways, using video chats or phone calls.

Is it safe to travel to campgrounds/go camping?
CDC recommends you **stay home** as much as possible and avoid close contact, especially if you are at higher risk of severe illness. Going camping at a time when much of the United States is experiencing community spread of COVID-19 can pose a risk to you if you come in close contact with others or share public facilities at campsites or along the trails. This is because it is possible for someone to have COVID-19 and spread it to others, even if they have no symptoms. Exposure may be especially unsafe if you are at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19 and are planning to be in remote areas, far away from medical care. Also be aware that many local, state, and national public parks have been temporarily closed due to COVID-19.

For the latest updates go to [Avera.org/covid-19](http://Avera.org/covid-19)

Avera’s mission is to make a positive impact in the lives and health of persons and communities by providing quality services guided by Christian values. If you think you may have problems paying part of your bill, contact your local business office or billing staff. We can discuss payment options that may be available to you.

© Copyright 2020. Content from Avera is protected by U.S. copyright laws. All rights reserved. This health-related information is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice or for the care that patients receive from their health care provider.