

# WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

## HOW DO I PREPARE?

### CREATE A HOME EMERGENCY KIT



NON-PERISHABLE  
FOOD



BOTTLED  
WATER



MEDICATIONS



FLASHLIGHT +  
EXTRA BATTERIES



FIRST AID KIT



WARM  
CLOTHING



BABY  
SUPPLIES



PET  
SUPPLIES

## WHAT TO PUT IN A COVID-19 EMERGENCY HOME-CARE KIT

The COVID-19 outbreak could last for an extended period of time in your community. Creating a household plan can help protect your health and the health of those you care about. If you or a family member gets infected with COVID-19, it is very likely that you'll have to ride it out at home.

Most COVID-19 cases don't require hospitalization, and as intensive-care beds fill, all but the most critical cases are being sent home. You should think about preparing to care for yourself and your loved ones under your own roof - and that means having the right supplies to nurse your ill family member and keep the rest of the family healthy.

### CREATE A HOUSEHOLD PLAN OF ACTION.

- Plan and make decisions in advance of an illness.
- Know how to protect and support the children in your care, if you have any.
- Find ways to cope with stress that will make you and your loved ones stronger.

### SAFETY AND CLEANING.

*Isolation and cleaning supplies: bleach; face masks that cover nose and mouth; gloves for entering sick room and doing laundry (latex or nitrile rubber); hand sanitizer; laundry detergent (wash everything on hot); nail brush; paper towels; soap; tissues.*

- The first task is to isolate patients with their own stash of tissues, disinfecting wipes, paper towels, soap and warm water.

- Use a separate room and bathroom for the sick household members (if possible). It is worth disrupting the rest of the household to try to keep the sick person in a room by themselves and keep everyone else out, even pets.
- Another key piece of equipment: masks. Patients should wear a face mask anytime they leave their room, and these excursions should be limited to bathroom trips only. Anyone entering the room should also wear a mask, regardless of age.
- Surgical masks are recommended but given the shortages, you can use a hardware-store face mask, or make your own with the guidance of the CDC. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>)
- Wear gloves - rubber or latex - when you enter the sickroom or when you clean.
- Stock up on cleaning supplies, because everything the sick person touches - like cutlery, doorknobs or the bathroom sink - must be cleaned.
- You can make a DIY bleach preparation by diluting five tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water. Regular hand soap is crucial, too. A nail brush to scrub under fingernails is also recommended.
- If the bathroom is shared, sick people should use disposable paper towels instead of a shared hand towel.
- Keep the patient's bath towels separate from everyone else's. And healthy family members should remove their toiletries from the shared space.

## MEDICINE.

*Medical supplies: cough drops; over-the-counter cold medicines; pulse oximeter and batteries; saline nasal spray; thermometer; Tylenol/acetaminophen (children's or infant's versions if applicable).*

- Anyone who falls ill should keep in contact with their doctor and let them know if symptoms worsen. To that end, the thermometer is very helpful.
- COVID-19 can affect breathing, several doctors recommended obtaining an at-home pulse oximeter: a device that clips onto the finger and measures heart rate and blood oxygen levels, which are important indicators of how well the lungs are functioning.
- Have regular cold medicines on hand and Tylenol or acetaminophen. If the patient is under 18, make sure you have children's or infant's versions.
- For most kids, you can stick to the items you would normally use for influenza or other respiratory ailments.
- It can be difficult to get children to wear a face mask, so the caregiver must always wear one when interacting with a sick child.
- A child's COVID-19 symptoms may be mild, but it's the same virus, and can be much worse in an adult.
- For a dry cough, throat lozenges can be helpful. Only give to a child if they are old enough not to choke on them. For younger children with throat pain, a little bit of warm tea with honey is acceptable.
- When to seek medical attention: if you develop **emergency warnings signs**, for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include\*:
  - Trouble breathing
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Bluish lips or face

\*This is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

## FOOD AND DRINK.

*Nutrition supplies: chicken soup; daily multivitamin and vitamin C tablets; electrolyte-replacement drinks (if using sports drinks, cut in half with water); fresh ginger, lemons, dill, fresh or dried oregano; high-calorie, nutrient-rich foods like avocados; honey for throat soothing; pectin-rich foods like bananas and apples.*

- As with any flulike virus, it is important that the patient drink plenty of fluids.
- Occasionally, COVID-19 can cause gastrointestinal distress and diarrhea, and replenishing fluids in those cases is especially important, as dehydration can worsen with a fever.
- Electrolyte-replacement drinks are recommended, but popular sports drinks like Gatorade tend to have high amounts of sugar, so they should be cut in half with water for both children and adults.
- Another reason to cut sports drinks with water is that sugar can make diarrhea worse. Sugar-free beverages with artificial sweetener aren't recommended either, because that, too, can worsen gastrointestinal problems. It is recommended to eat pectin-rich foods like bananas and apples to ease symptoms of diarrhea.
- Some patients tend to lose their appetite when sick, especially children, therefore, it is recommended to have on hand comforting, high-calorie but nutrient-dense foods like apple sauce and avocados.
- Your recommended dose of a daily multivitamin and vitamin C tablets will also help.
- Never underestimate the power of chicken soup, as protein is very important when fighting viral illnesses. Consider adding dill, oregano and ginger to soups for their antiviral properties.

## CREATE AN EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST.

- Ensure your household has a current list of emergency contacts for family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health care providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, and other community resources.
- Talk with your neighbors about emergency planning. If your neighborhood has a website or social media page, consider joining it to maintain access to neighbors, information, and resources.
- Create a list of local organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you need access to information, health care services, support, and resources. Consider including organizations that provide mental health or counseling services, food, and other supplies.

Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild illness and should recover at home. Care at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help protect people who are at risk for getting seriously ill from COVID-19. Please consider creating a household plan of action.

Please note: Older adults and people of any age with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes are at a higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should seek care as soon as symptoms start.

**Resources:** WSJ, *What to Put in a Covid-19 Emergency Home-Care Kit*, by Hilary Potkewitz, shared by Sam Sidhu; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>