

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Social or Physical Distancing

Public Health is asking everyone to do their part to help slow the spread of novel coronavirus in our community by practicing social distancing (also known as physical distancing). This means making changes in our daily lives to protect ourselves and others, including those who are most at risk.

Note: People who are sick or who have been in contact with people who have COVID-19 should take stronger measures than physical distancing to reduce the risk of infecting others. People with symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate (see ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation for instructions) and individuals who are close contacts of people with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 should quarantine (see ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine for instructions).

What is social distancing or physical distancing?

It means staying home, avoiding crowds, and staying at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible.

Why is everyone being asked to practice physical distancing?

When someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes the small droplets from their nose or mouth can travel 3-6 feet. People can get infected if they breathe in these droplets, or the droplets land on their eyes, nose, or mouth. It may be possible that a person can also get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

The less time that we spend within 6 feet of each other, and the fewer people we interact with, the more likely we are to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Legal orders have been amended to allow more businesses, services, and recreation areas to re-open in Los Angeles County. To see the latest information visit ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/SaferatHomeOrder_ExamplesofOpenings.pdf and for more details see ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/guidances.htm. Even though there are more places to visit since the Stay at Home Order was lifted, the best protection against COVID-19 continues to be limiting the number of different people that you have close contact with, practicing physical distancing, washing your hands frequently, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, and wearing a clean face covering when in contact with others from outside your household.

How do I practice physical distancing?

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Avoid any places where a lot of people are together.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Work or study from home, if possible.
- Do not have visitors over or let your children have playdates.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Avoid public transport, if you can.

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- Avoid contact with people – instead of shaking hands, come up with other ways to greet people that don't involve any touching or getting closer than 6 feet.

If you do have to use public transport, shop, go to work, or participate in other activities, take precautions to reduce the risks, such as:

- Limit the amount of time you spend in close contact with others.
- Limit the number of different people you spend time with.
- Keep as far away from others as possible, especially if they are coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a cloth face covering. Make sure to use it properly - see [Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information. Infants and children under the age of 2 should not wear cloth face coverings. Those between the ages of 2 and 8 should use them but under adult supervision to ensure that the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation. Children with breathing problems should not wear a face covering.
- Try to go to places at times when they are less busy.
- Avoid touching surfaces in public places, when possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly.
- Clean your hands often, especially after touching surfaces in public places and before eating, and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

Food and other necessities

- Have one member of the household go to the store. Go when it is less busy and stock up on essential supplies so that you don't have to go out as often, and keep at least 6 feet away from people as much as you can.
- You can use food delivery, drive-thru, or carry out as long as everyone practices physical distancing. If you chose to eat in a café or restaurant, be sure to follow any rules they have put into place for physical distancing and infection control. If you order something for delivery, if possible, pay and tip electronically and ask for the item to be left outside your door. Remove food from delivery bags and boxes and dispose of the packaging. Wash your hands after handling the packaging.
- If you are at higher risk of getting sick from COVID-19, ask for food, medical supplies, and other essential items to be brought to your door through family, neighbors, or delivery services. Call 2-1-1 or visit the Public Health [resource webpage \(ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm\)](https://ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm) if you need assistance getting food and other essential items.

Tips

- Talk to your employer about options for working from home.
- Exercise at home or outdoors – you can walk, run, or bike as long as you are 6 feet from others.
- Avoid isolation by using technology and the phone to communicate with friends and family often.
- Take care of one another – check-in by phone with friends, family, and neighbors who are vulnerable to serious illness or have mobility issues. Offer to help, while still following physical distancing guidelines.

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- If you are sick, call your doctor or dentist before visiting. Check their website or call to find out if they offer telemedicine or phone advice.
- Stay informed through trusted sources for the latest accurate information about novel coronavirus.

Stress

- Physical distancing is stressful. If you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, read [Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#) on the Public Health website.
- For help, talk to your doctor or call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.

Reporting Stigma

The County is committed to assuring that all residents affected by COVID-19 are treated with respect and compassion. We must separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. The outbreak is no excuse for spreading racism and discrimination. If you or someone you know experiences discrimination based on race, nation of origin or other identities, please report it. You can report hate crimes, hate acts, and incidents of bullying in Los Angeles County, whether or not a crime has been committed. Call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1 which is available 24/7, or file a report online at: <https://www.211la.org/public-health-and-safety/anti-hate>.

Resources:

If you need help finding social services, essential items like food, medicines, or medical care call 2-1-1 or visit the Public Health [resource webpage](#). If you need to speak with someone about your mental health, contact your doctor or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771.

Visit the DPH coronavirus webpage <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> for information that can be downloaded and printed in multiple languages on topics such as:

- [How to Cope with Stress](#)
- [Cleaning in the Home](#)
- [Handwashing](#)
- [Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings](#)
- [Home Quarantine Instructions](#) for people who are close contacts to COVID-19
- [Home Isolation Instructions](#) for people with COVID-19
- [Home Care Guidance](#) for people who are sick