



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency

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COVID-19 Guidance for Older Adults and High Risk Populations in Santa Cruz County

Certain individuals are at higher risk of developing severe symptoms as a result of COVID-19 infections. Please read further for more information on how to **Protect, Plan, and Care** for yourself and your loved one with greater precaution.

UNDERSTAND SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

List of Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor first

Emergency Warning Signs:

- Get immediate medical help for difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face. (* Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning)

Higher Risk Populations include:

- Older Adults (60+)
- People with serious chronic medical conditions such as:
 - Heart Disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung Disease
 - Kidney Disease

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Follow these guidelines to reduce your risk of becoming sick with COVID-19

- Wash your hands often (soap and water for 20 seconds). Especially after going out in public spaces.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
- Clean “high-touch” surfaces like counters, door-knobs, phones, keyboards, tabletops with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Avoid crowds, avoid spaces with poor air-flow, and people who are sick.
- Stock up on household items and non-perishable groceries in case you need to stay home.
- Stock up on food and supplies for your pets.
- Avoid all non-essential travel including plane trips, and especially avoid cruise ships.

PLAN AHEAD! Start Preparing NOW.

Planning ahead is very important for Seniors and Vulnerable Populations. It will help ensure that you have the people, medications, and supplies you need in case you get sick or need to stay home for an extended amount of time. Please use this checklist below as a guide for your preparation:

- Do you have a caregiver? Identify who can take care of you in case your caregiver gets sick.
- Create a list of your medication, dosage and when taken. Make sure your family, friends, and caregiver know what medications you are taking (and how). Include your doctor's contact information on this list.
- Call your healthcare provider to request extra medication to have on hand in case you get sick or need to stay home for an extended amount of time to avoid exposure to COVID-19. Consider mail-order pharmacies during this outbreak or have a caregiver pick up your medications
- Have a list of contacts who you can call in case you need help. Create an Emergency Contact List and place it in a central location with your medication list. Include the names of your doctors on this list. If you have a POLST form or other document that details your medical preferences then keep that with your medications and contact list.
- Have extra over-the-counter medicines and supplies at home (ex. Tissues, oxygen, wound care).
- Identify aid organizations in your community. Call 2-1-1 for local information www.211.org
- If a family member is in a care facility, ask about the health of other residents and monitor the situation.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK:

(How to Take Care of Yourself or Loved Ones)

- **STAY HOME** and call your healthcare provider (doctor) and let them know about your symptoms. Let them know you may have COVID-19. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
- Get medical attention immediately if you have emergency warning signs (see information above in Emergency Warning Signs).
- Do not handle your pets if you are sick until more information is known about the virus. Arrange for others to feed and care for your pets. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#animals>
- Avoid sharing household items (plates, cups, utensils, bedding, towels) with members of your household.
- Wash Laundry. Wash items immediately if soiled (blood, stool, body fluids). Use disposable gloves to handle soiled laundry and wash hands immediately after removing gloves. Use regular laundry detergent and washing methods.
- Place all gloves, masks, other contaminated items in a separate bag before disposing it with other household waste.

For the most up-to-date information, visit www.cdc.gov/covid19 and www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus