

# AGING & independence

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

## SPECIAL EDITION: CORONAVIRUS

By Kim Gallo  
Director, Aging & Independence Services

### WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes diseases, ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory disease. The 2019 novel (new) coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that hasn't been identified before in humans. As of March 13, 2020, San Diego County's general population is considered to be at low risk of contracting coronavirus disease, also referred to as COVID-19 (for the current status, visit [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com) or call 2-1-1). However, risks are higher for those over the age of 60 and those who have chronic health conditions.

### HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- Close contact (within 6 feet)
- Respiratory droplets from a person coughing or sneezing
- Close personal contact (touching or shaking hands)
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

### UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

For current information about COVID-19, please visit:

- [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com)
- [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Information for facilities (see page 3)**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- ☐ Runny nose   ☐ Sore throat   ☐ Headache
- ☐ Fever   ☐ Cough   ☐ General feeling of being unwell

There is no specific treatment; however, many symptoms can be relieved. There is currently no vaccine available.

### WHO IS HIGH RISK FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS?

The current evidence, based on data from China and other parts of the world, indicates the following groups are at highest risk for COVID-19.

- Older adults (60 and over)
- Individuals with serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease

### PREVENTION MEASURES

There are a variety of steps that older adults and those with chronic medical conditions can take to protect their health and the health of those around them. It is important to stay calm, but be prepared. Please see **page 2** for a list of recommendations from the California Department of Public Health.



## MEASURES FOR HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS

Individuals and caregivers can take steps now to slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends implementing the following steps:

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid crowds, mass gatherings, or large events. Limit use of public transit.
- If you do attend social gatherings, they should be limited to ten or fewer people and individuals should keep a distance of at least 6 feet from one another.
- Stay home when sick.
  - If you have an elevated temperature, remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
  - Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, (e.g., high fever or difficulty breathing).
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and cell phones).
  - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
  - Or, use a household cleaner that is registered with the EPA as approved for killing emerging viral pathogens (e.g., Clorox Disinfectant Wipes, Lysol, etc.). Consult [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for information on preventing COVID-19 spread in communities.
- Use “respiratory etiquette.”
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue away, and then wash your hands. Have adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.
- Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
  - Encourage hand washing by caregivers, family, and friends.
  - Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) to supplement hand washing.
  - Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Have supplies on hand (e.g., enough groceries and household goods to last several weeks).
- Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.

*(Continued on page three)*

## KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, AND STAY CONNECTED

One of the most effective ways to prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19 is to practice “social distancing.” Individuals at high-risk should stay home as much as possible. They should only attend gatherings with 10 or fewer people, and keep a distance of at least six feet between themselves and others. However, social connection is still important. Stay connected to friends and loved ones by phone, text, email, or video conferencing. Attend classes online. You can still stay fit and healthy from home, as well. Visit [www.healthierlivingsd.org](http://www.healthierlivingsd.org) to learn how to participate in a Feeling Fit Club class from home!

*(Continued from page two)*

## MEASURES FOR HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS, CONTINUED

- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications.
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
- Have a plan for if you get sick:
  - Consult with your health care provider for more information about monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.
  - Stay in touch with others by phone or email. You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
  - Determine who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick.
- More information for people at higher risk and special populations can be found at:  
**[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups)**

## FAMILY AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Know what medications your loved one or client is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care needs) and create a back-up plan.
- Stock up on non-perishable food items to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- If a loved one lives in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently, and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.
- For additional guidance for home care workers and caregivers, visit:  
**[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html)**

## INFORMATION FOR FACILITIES

- Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities:  
**[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html)**
- Information for Assisted Living/Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs):  
**[caassistedliving.org/pdf/resources/coronavirus.pdf](http://caassistedliving.org/pdf/resources/coronavirus.pdf)**

## IMPORTANT WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information, refer to the websites listed below. If you have questions, call **2-1-1** to speak to someone.

- **[www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com)**
- **[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)**
- **[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**

## AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

P.O. Box 23217  
 San Diego, CA 92193-3217  
 (800) 339-4661

Return Service Requested

■ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ■ PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY ■



## When You Don't Know Where To Turn Turn To Us!



Whether the need is for assessment, service referrals, or follow-up, with just one phone call, you or a loved one can receive help for:

- Seniors
- Disabled adults
- Abused adults
- Those requiring home-based care to prevent institutionalization

As a public agency, we provide comprehensive information and impartial assistance free of charge to county residents.

Since 1974, people have been turning to us at  
 Aging & Independence Services.  
 You can too.



Call Toll Free: **(800) 339-4661**  
[www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov)



COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT ■ HEALTH INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

HOME-BASED SERVICES ■ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

■ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ■ PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY ■



*Aging & Independence*™ is published monthly by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services. The purpose is to inform and recognize older adults, volunteers, and community partners.

Chief Administrative Officer  
 Helen Robbins-Meyer

Director, Health & Human Services Agency  
 Nick Macchione

Director, Aging and Adult Services  
 Aging & Independence Services  
 Kimberly Gallo

Editor, Sarah "Sally" Jackson  
[sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Calendar information is welcome and must be submitted before the 1st of the month preceding the issue date. Submit to: Editor *Aging & Independence*, P.O. Box 23217, San Diego, CA 92193. Or, submit by email to: [sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Special permission is not needed to reproduce any information contained in this publication with credits to *Aging & Independence*™