



# GUIDELINES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is spreading globally and there have been instances of COVID-19 community spread within New York. While there remain no cases of COVID-19 in Putnam County, the general strategies CDC recommends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same strategies used every day to prevent the spread of other respiratory viruses like influenza. The most important thing you can do is to stay informed and be prepared.

### Are you at risk?

Older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease seem to be at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. Early data suggest older people are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness.

If you are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications due to age or because you have a severe underlying medical condition, it is especially important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of exposure.

### What can you do to prepare?

- Stock up on supplies
  - Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19.
  - If you cannot get extra medications, consider using a mail-order pharmacy for medications.
  - Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat a fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
  - Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for up to 14 days.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Take everyday preventive actions.
    - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
    - If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
    - To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.

- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
  - 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).
  - Avoid crowds as much as possible
    - Since COVID-19 has been identified in the Hudson Valley, take extra measures to put distance between yourself and other people.
    - Stay home as much as possible.
    - Consider ways of getting food brought to your house through family, social, or commercial networks.
- Have a plan for if you or a caregiver get sick
- If you have symptoms that are suggestive of COVID-19, consult with your healthcare provider for more information about monitoring your health.
  - 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.
- Know the symptoms of COVID-19
- Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
  - If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs include\*:
    - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - New confusion or inability to arouse
    - Bluish lips or face
- If you need to call for help, call before you go- you must tell your doctor or EMS that you suspect you have COVID-19
- \*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

Outbreaks involving COVID-19 evolve quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change as new information becomes available. Please check the following websites often for updated information:

For the most up-to-date local information:

[www.putnamcountyny.com/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health)  
[www.facebook.com/putnamhealthny](https://www.facebook.com/putnamhealthny)  
[www.twitter.com/putnamhealthny](https://www.twitter.com/putnamhealthny)  
[www.instagram.com/putnamhealthny](https://www.instagram.com/putnamhealthny)

For more information:

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>  
 NYSDOH <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>