

# CORONAVIRUS & OLDER ADULTS...

## What You Need to Know

### Who's at Higher Risk?

Certain people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:

Heart Disease

Diabetes

Lung Disease

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

### Everyday Precautions

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- 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.
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.
- Put distance between yourself and other people & avoid shaking hands.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
- Clean and disinfect your home & vehicle(s): practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, cell phones & TV remotes).
- Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces.
- Avoid all non-essential travel including plane trips, and especially cruise ships.

### Key Symptoms to Watch For

- 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 are\*

- *Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath*

- *Persistent pain or pressure in the chest*

- *New confusion or inability to arouse*

- *Bluish lips or face*

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

## What to Do If You Feel Sick?

- Stay home and call your doctor; DO NOT go to the emergency room!
- Call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms. This will help them take care of you and keep other people from getting infected.
- Get medical attention immediately if you have any of the emergency warning signs listed on the front page.
- People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to isolate and recover at home during their illness. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Follow CDC instructions for how to take care of yourself at home at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>
- Limit contact with pets & animals. If you must care for your pet while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact and wear a facemask.

## Plan Ahead

- Contact your healthcare provider to obtain extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications. You can also call FiftyForward's Care Management team if you need assistance (615) 743-3416.
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms.
- Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time (e.g., 14 day self-quarantine).
- 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. Consider ways to get food brought to your house through family, social, or commercial networks.

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