

COVID-19 Guidance for People with Disabilities, Older Adults and People with Underlying Health Conditions

April 6, 2020

Oregon has recently seen novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in people without high-risk exposures such as travel to affected regions or contact with known cases. This means COVID-19 has spread in Oregon. Community-wide measures such as social distancing, hand hygiene and staying home when ill are essential to decrease community spread.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), older adults and people with underlying health conditions may have a higher risk of severe illness. Underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of serious COVID-19 for people of any age are:



- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Conditions that can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications



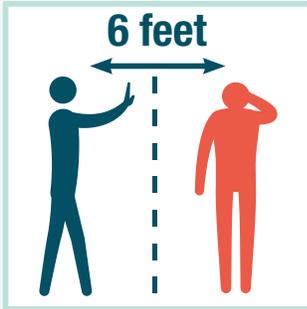
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes



- Chronic kidney disease and those who are undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease.



OHA bases guidance on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of COVID-19. This OHA guidance helps inform people with disabilities and caregivers. Information for the broader population with access and functional needs is included. You and your caregivers should base decisions on your circumstances and accurate information.



Oregon initiatives

On March 23, 2020, Governor Brown issued a stay-at-home order for Oregonians. This includes closing of non-essential businesses to help slow the spread of COVID-19. When people are in public, Oregon encourages social distancing – keeping 6 feet between each other. Read the full order at www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-12.pdf.

Some people rely on others to provide hands-on or close support. People providing these life-sustaining services should continue doing so. However, caregivers should take precautions by following guidelines at <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2288q.pdf>.

Social distancing, as well as closing schools and limiting gatherings to 10 people, intends to help Oregonians “flatten the curve.” This will slow the number of people who are ill at any given time to ensure our health systems continue to function well.

You can find more information on social distancing at <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2268.pdf>.

Keeping physical and mental health

Older adults and people with underlying conditions can stay safe and healthy if you take steps to protect yourself.

Besides taking everyday precautions, **avoid:**



Public gatherings



People who are sick



Cruise ships



Non-essential travel

You may feel more anxiety during times of uncertainty. Social distancing can create or intensify mental health issues due to the decrease in daily human interaction. It is important during this time to maintain connections using interactive technology. This includes phone and video chat check-ins.

If you need non-emergency help:

- Use the **Disaster Distress Hotline:**

1-800-985-5990
Text TalkWithUs to 66746
TTY 1-800-846-8517
TTY dial 711

Spanish

1-800-985-5990, then press “2”
Text Hablanos to 66746



- Call 211 for COVID-19 information, including local mental health resources. 211info also has information about programs to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, health care and more, available in all counties.
 - » You may also text your ZIP code to 898211.
 - » *Language interpreters are available by phone.*
Text and email are available in English and Spanish.
 - » *TTY dial 711.*
 - » Go to <https://www.211info.org/contact>.
- Call for local mental health support.
Following is a list of mental health services by county in Oregon:
www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/AMH/Pages/CMH-Programs.aspx.

In an emergency always call 911.

What to do if you feel sick

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:



Fever



Cough



Shortness of breath

Call your health care provider or [local health department](#) if you believe you are sick. They can help you:

- Decide if you need an appointment, and
- Plan to enter a clinic in a way that avoids possibly infecting others, if you do go in.

If you don't have a doctor:



- Call 211 for a list of clinics near you, or
- Call your local urgent care center for an appointment.



Not everyone who is sick needs to be tested for COVID-19. Your health care provider will determine if you need testing.

If you are an older adult and you have any health concern, call your health care provider.

What to do if you think you had exposure to COVID-19

If you think you had exposure to COVID-19, and you get symptoms of it, stay away from other people so you don't get them sick. **Call your doctor or a clinic for instructions.**

What to do in an emergency

If it's an emergency or your symptoms are severe (e.g., trouble breathing), call 911.

If you are able, tell 911 and the hospital about any known exposure to someone with COVID-19.

For more details on COVID-19 testing basics, go to <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2279A.pdf>.

Everyday actions to follow

Everyone should follow these everyday steps to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, cough into your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you often touch.
- Clean medical supplies and equipment often and use as the product states.



Self and caregiver preparations

You and your caregivers can take steps now to slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases. This includes COVID-19. Take time to review and update your personal emergency plan. This can include the following:

- Know the medicines you take and keep at least a two weeks' supply. You may be able to do so by talking to your primary care provider or insurance company. Some insurers, such as Medicaid fee-for-service, have relaxed refill rules. Read more at <https://dfr.oregon.gov/insure/health/understand/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>.
- Stock up on other medical supplies and non-perishable food items to minimize trips to the store (and contact with people).
- Arrange for back-up caregivers and transportation.
- Know your important numbers.
 - » Any 24/7 health lines of health providers and health plans
 - » Specialty health care providers
 - » Support service numbers:
 - Community-based organizations
 - Transportation providers
 - Health plans
 - Care coordinators
 - Nurse hotlines
 - Telehealth services
 - » Food, medicines and supplies delivery.

- Develop plans with service providers who make regular home visits to minimize exposure, for example:
 - » Personal assistant
 - » Attendant services
 - » Home health
 - » Hospice
 - » Independent living counselors.
- Understand the emergency plans of facilities you visit on a daily or regular basis, such as:
 - » Dialysis centers
 - » Blood treatment centers
 - » Chemo
 - » Other infusion therapy sites.



Call before you go to discuss how you can protect yourself.

Residential and in-home care

State guidance and policies for in-home care and residential settings (facilities or group homes) continue to evolve and change as the pandemic progresses. If your loved one is living in a care facility, do the following:

- Ask about the health of residents often.
- Follow visitor restrictions.
- Know what the facility's protocol will be if there is an outbreak there.

March 17, 2020

The Department of Human Services (DHS)
Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) issued:

- Policy on residential, adult foster care and in-home service supports
- Policy guidance on restrictions to visitors to 24-hour residential settings and supported living
- Guidance on developmental disabilities eligibility determination.

Overview: ODDS is not allowing any non-essential visitors to:

- 24-hour residential group homes
- Adult foster care
- Assisted living facilities
- Supported living (when your provider owns or rents the home).

See the full guidance here: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/DirectorMessages/In-Home-Res-Covid-DD-Dir-Final.pdf>.

For the most updated information, visit DHS ODDS at <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/Pages/ODDS-COVID-19-Information.aspx>. Subscribe to email updates at the top of the page.

March 10, 2020

OHA Public Health Division (PHD) issued COVID-19 infection control guidance for workers providing in-home personal care.

See the full guidance here: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Emerging%20Respiratory%20Infections/COVID-19-Interim-Infection-Control-Guidance-Home-Care-Workers.pdf>.

DHS, in consultation with OHA PHD, issued policies to limit exposure to COVID-19 in long-term care facilities (LTCF). This policy applies to all nursing facilities, residential care and assisted living facilities, including those with memory care endorsements.

Overview: To prevent respiratory germs in facilities, LTCF will do the following:

1. Restrict visitation of non-essential persons.
2. Limit visitation to two essential visitors per resident at any given time.
3. Screen 100 percent of essential visitors before entry into the building, consistent with screening criteria.

Find the full policy at https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ORDHS/2020/03/10/file_attachments/1397712/NF-20-67%20Executive%20Letter%20from%20Mike%20McCormick.pdf.

COVID-19 resources

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- Oregon Health Authority's COVID-19 website: <http://healthoregon.org/coronavirus>

Resources on the Oregon Health Authority's web page include:

- » Sign up for email updates
 - » Infographics and information in multiple languages
 - » New and updated guidance for a variety of populations
 - » Current numbers of COVID-19 cases in Oregon
 - » Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Pages/COVID19-FAQ.aspx>.
- Local Public Health Authority Directory: www.healthoregon.org/lhddirectory
 - DHS COVID-19 web page: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/COVID-19/Pages/Home.aspx>
 - DHS ODDS COVID-19 web page: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/Pages/ODDS-COVID-19-Information.aspx>

Resources on the ODDS web page include:

- » Case manager information
- » Provider information
- » General public notices, including a simple video explaining COVID-19
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ8eeC-tVD4&feature=youtu.be>
- » Sign up for email updates.
- Administration for Community Living (ACL) <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>
- Governor's Office COVID-19 web page <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/pages/index.aspx>

For SEIU 503 members

- Learn what SEIU is doing for its members here: https://seiu503.org/member_news/coronavirus-resources-for-seiu-members/

For people who are Deaf and heard of hearing

- COVID-19 resources: <https://www.amphl.org/blog/2020/3/15/covid-19-resource-list>

Plain language booklet

- Plain Language Booklet on Coronavirus, developed by the Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC):
 - » <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plain-Language-Information-on-Coronavirus.pdf>
 - » Spanish: <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/plain-language-information-on-covid-19-spanish-version/>

For families of children and youth with special health care needs

- Parent and caregiver guide to helping families cope with COVID-19:
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>

For older adults and people with chronic health conditions

- Common questions and answers about COVID-19 for older adults and people with chronic health conditions:
<https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/common/AOA%20-%20Alliance%20for%20Aging%20Rsch%20-%20Nat%20Fdn%20for%20ID%20-%202013-12-20.pdf>

For people living with HIV

- Frequently Asked Questions: Coronavirus (COVID-19) and HIV:
 - » <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/HIVSTDVIRALHEPATITIS/HIVCARETREATMENT/CAREASSIST/Documents/FAQ-covid-19-and-hiv.pdf>
 - » Spanish: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/HIVSTDVIRALHEPATITIS/HIVCARETREATMENT/CAREASSIST/Documents/FAQ-covid-19-and-hiv%20SP.pdf>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Q&A about the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and COVID-19:
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/bulletins/281dd9d>
- For questions and concerns on ADA-related and access-related topics pertaining to COVID-19:
 - » Northwest ADA Center
 - ADA Hotline: 1-800-949-4232
 - nwadactr@uw.edu

Food support

- Oregon Food Bank locations:
<https://www.oregonfoodbank.org/find-help/find-food/>
- Where to find school meals in Oregon during COVID-19 closures:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vQdNuwGk2d3GnFHMqWP5EOM4C9sTKriEoTXNlbCFjJuxHIOz8wKv89L-dtDAOf4IWcjl8QM82L-mOW3/pubhtml?gid=1537028636&single=true&widget=true&headers=false&url=mailto:>
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - » Call or email a DHS office to access an application. Find your local office at <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Offices/Pages/Self-Sufficiency.aspx>.
 - » You can also apply online at <https://apps.state.or.us/onlineApplication/>.
- Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) of Oregon:
<https://www.adrcforegon.org/consite/index.php>

Questions comments and concerns

You can send questions, comments and concerns about this guidance or about COVID-19 and people with disabilities to oregon.masscare@dhsosha.state.or.us.

You can send comments or concerns about state policies around COVID-19 issued by Governor Kate Brown to Constituent Services in the Governor's Office at 503-378-4582. You may also use an online form to submit them. Go to:

<https://www.oregon.gov/gov/pages/request-assistance.aspx>.

Acknowledgments

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