

YOUR RISK FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS FROM COVID-19 IF YOU ARE A CURRENT OR FORMER SMOKER



Smoking affects every organ of the body and remains the leading preventable cause of premature disease and death in the United States.¹

If you are a current or former smoker, you have a higher risk of getting very sick* from a COVID-19 infection compared to people who do not smoke.²

This is because cigarette smoking:

- Damages the cells in your lungs that contain cilia: little hair-like structures that fight against bugs like viruses, including COVID-19²
- Weakens your immune system²
- Causes inflammation in your lungs²
- Increases the amount of a protein called ACE2 in your lungs, which makes it easier for the COVID-19 virus to get into the lung cells²

If you currently smoke and you get infected with COVID-19, compared to non-smokers, you are:

15% more likely to need a ventilator³

27% more likely to have cardiovascular problems such as heart attack, stroke, or heart failure³

41% more likely to die from COVID-19 - related complications³

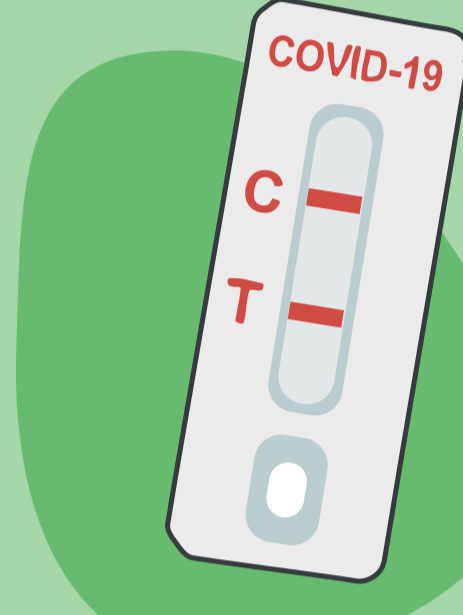


WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are a smoker, quitting is one of the best things you can do to help manage your COVID-19 risk.⁴

COVID-19 can be serious, but you can help prepare for it^{5,6}:

- Talk to your healthcare provider about getting vaccinated against COVID-19, including an updated booster if eligible⁷
- Understand your risk for severe COVID-19. Your risk is dependent on multiple factors, including age (50 years and older), underlying medical conditions, whether you have been vaccinated, and other risk factors. Talk to your healthcare provider about your personal risk.⁸
- Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19⁵
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, get tested immediately. If you were exposed to COVID-19 and do not have symptoms, wait at least 5 full days after your exposure before testing⁹
- Talk to your healthcare provider about potential treatment options if you test positive for COVID-19 or have signs or symptoms of COVID-19¹⁰



ADDITIONAL REMINDERS FOR PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK FOR SEVERE ILLNESS FROM COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides some information on how to continue protecting your own and others' health⁴:

1

Take preventative measures

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations
- Improve ventilation (moving air into, out of, or within a room)
- Get tested if you have symptoms
- Follow recommendations for what to do if you have been exposed
- Stay home if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- Seek treatment if you have COVID-19 and are at high risk of getting very sick
- Avoid contact with people who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- Wear a mask or respirator (for example, N95)
- Increase space and distance (avoid crowded areas, or keep distance between yourself and others)

2

Seek care when needed

- Call your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about medical conditions or about having COVID-19. **If you need emergency help, call 911 right away.**
- Do not delay getting care for any existing medical conditions

3

Continue medications and preventative care

- Continue your medications as prescribed and do not change your treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider
- Have at least a 30-day supply of your medications (both prescription and non-prescription)
- Follow your current treatment plan to keep your medical condition(s) under control
- Keep appointments with your healthcare provider, when possible
- Learn about stress and coping. It can be helpful to talk with a healthcare provider if you are experiencing increased stress.

4

Accommodate dietary needs and avoid triggers

- Have food options readily available that last for a long time without spoiling, and meet your needs based on your medical condition(s)
- Know the triggers of your medical condition and avoid them when possible

*Getting very sick (being severely ill) with COVID-19 means that a person is more likely to be hospitalized, need intensive care, require a ventilator to help them breathe, or die.⁴

References

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