



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Safer at Home Advisory and Self-Isolation

Updated May 14, 2020

On May 13th, Governor Larry Hogan announced the beginning of Stage One of the '[Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery](#),' which includes moving from a Stay at Home order to a Safer at Home public health advisory and the gradual reopenings of retail, manufacturing, houses of worship, and some personal services.

Marylanders, particularly older and more vulnerable Marylanders, are strongly advised to continue staying home as much as possible. Employers should continue to encourage telework for their employees when possible. Individuals who can work from home should continue to do so.

Maryland citizens should continue wearing masks in indoor public areas, retail stores, and on public transportation.

The Reopening of Certain Businesses and Facilities order is available at <https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gatherings-SIXTH-AMENDED-5.13.20.pdf>

Am I allowed to leave the house?

Yes, Marylanders are allowed to go to an essential job or leave the home for an essential reason, such as obtaining food or medicine, seeking urgent medical attention, or for other necessary purposes.

On April 15, Gov. Hogan issued an executive order for all Marylanders to wear face coverings when inside retail establishments or when riding any form of public transportation in the state.

Read the executive order at

<https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Masks-and-Physical-Distancing-4.15.20.pdf>

Cloth face coverings can be made from household items and include wearing a scarf or bandanna that covers the nose and mouth. The CDC has detailed guidance and instructions regarding homemade cloth face coverings available at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. People with disabilities who are unable to wear a mask are provided reasonable accommodations per the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Will schools reopen?

No. On May 6th, the Maryland State Department of Education announced that schools will remain closed for the remainder of the school year.

Can we go to the store for food?

Yes, getting food is considered an essential purpose.

Can I still get food from take-out places and restaurants providing take out service?

Yes, getting food is considered an essential service. Please call and order first so that you ensure they are open.

Can my lawn service or landscaper come out and work in my yard?

Yes. Please confer with your lawn service and make a good faith determination about whether it is “essential or non-essential.”

Can my house cleaner come and clean our house?

Please confer with your cleaning service about their willingness to keep delivering the service safely. Also, if you are ill or in any elevated risk category, limit all outside visitors to your home.

Can we go for a walk or run around the neighborhood?

Yes, but do not congregate with neighbors while you are outside. Wave and smile and continue on your way.

Can I go to a park?

Yes, you can go to a park that is open, but do not gather in a group with others once you are there. It is good to get exercise and fresh air, and to take a pet on a walk, but stay at least six feet away from others.

What sorts of businesses are open?

Many, but not all, food and drink establishments which offer carry-out are still serving. Grocery stores, big box retailers like Walmart, pharmacies and drug stores are also open, although some

have limited hours. Check online to see if your local restaurants offer curbside, no-contact pick-up. You may drive to get it.

When will I be able to go back to work?

If you are sick, with COVID-19 or any other virus, you should self-isolate at home for at least 7 days after your symptoms started or 3 days after your last fever, whichever is longer -- if your symptoms improve. If you are well and your business is closed, you will need to continue to stay at home. Work with your employer to see if teleworking or working remotely is possible.

SELF-ISOLATING AT HOME WITH COVID-19

I just tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

Listen to your healthcare provider's guidance. If you test positive, you should self-isolate at home for at least 7 days after your symptoms started or 3 days after your last fever, whichever is longer -- if your symptoms improve. Continue to practice good hygiene, including frequent and thorough hand washing, disinfecting "high-touch" surfaces and frequently washing clothing and bedding.

Practice social distancing within the home if you live with family members or other people. That means keep to one room or suite of rooms and keep away from family members, particularly older adults and young children, as much as possible.

If I do have COVID-19, what happens?

The vast majority of people recover from this disease in one to two weeks. Most people will have mild to moderate symptoms and will be advised to recover at home and isolate themselves from others. These individuals should call their physicians or healthcare practitioners if their symptoms get worse.

What should I do if I start to feel worse?

Call your healthcare provider immediately. If you do not have a healthcare provider, call your local health department. Do not go to an urgent care facility or emergency department without calling first. If you are experiencing emergency symptoms such as inability to breathe, confusion, or blue lips, call 911.

How do I self-isolate at home while I recover?

Ideally, you should stay in a separate bedroom where you can recover without sharing immediate space with others. You will need to have access to necessary resources, food and medications while you recover.

Depending on the severity of your symptoms, you may need a caregiver available to provide support. Caregivers should practice good hygiene, including frequent and thorough handwashing, avoiding touching their face, and frequently disinfecting "high touch" surfaces. Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.

If I have COVID-19, will I need to go to a hospital?

Most people will have mild to moderate symptoms and will be advised to recover at home and isolate themselves from others. For some people, COVID-19 can lead to serious illness. If someone has a serious illness from COVID-19, they may be admitted to the hospital.

Will my positive COVID-19 test results be reported to public health entities?

Yes. Positive COVID-19 test results will be reported to the appropriate public health agency in accordance with applicable Maryland laws and regulations.

How will I know when I don't need to be quarantined any longer?

You should self-isolate at home for at least 7 days after your symptoms started or 3 days after your last fever, whichever is longer, and if your symptoms are improved. Continue to practice good hygiene, including frequent and thorough hand washing, disinfecting "high-touch" surfaces and frequently washing clothing and bedding.

Will other members of my household get COVID-19 if they are living in the house with me?

Not necessarily, if you practice good social distancing. Your close contacts should monitor their health; they should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath).

See [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings](#).

Close contacts should also follow these recommendations:

- If helping to care for someone who tested positive, make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and care.
- You should help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call their healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected if you must go into the facility. Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department for additional guidance.
- If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has, or is being evaluated for COVID-19.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. For more information, see [COVID-19 and Animals](#).
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.

- Perform hand hygiene frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The patient should wear a facemask when you are around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room as the patient.
- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine.
- Throw out disposable face masks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
- When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly.
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after removing your gloves.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Discuss any additional questions with your state or local health department or healthcare provider. Check available hours when contacting your local health department.