What happens if you get sick with COVID-19?

If you get sick with COVID-19, you may experience mild to severe respiratory illness. People with COVID-19 report a wide range of symptoms, including:

- Fever
- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting

Most people who get COVID-19 get mild to moderate symptoms and recover quickly at home. However, some people develop severe disease and require hospitalization. People who are older or have pre-existing medical conditions (such as heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes) are at higher risk of severe illness. If you are sick, call the healthcare facility to let them know before you come in.

Facts about COVID-19 to discuss with children

Communicating with children about COVID-19 can be challenging. Children want to know what is happening and may need help making sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear.

Tips for talking to children

- Keep it simple. Children will not understand complex information. Use language that is appropriate for their age.
- Be honest. Children need to know the truth, but they do not need to know everything. If you do not understand a question, say so.
- Avoid frightening language. Children can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Answer questions. If you do not know the answer, be honest and let the child know you will try to find out.
- Avoid language that might blame others or create division. Help children understand how everyone can work together to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Let children know that they will be safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Provide information that is truthful and age-appropriate for the age and development level of the children.
- Let children know that people who have COVID-19 do not have a special power. They may be scared, anxious, and feel diagnosed. Children may misconceive what they hear about COVID-19.
- Avoid language that might blame others or create division. Help children understand how everyone can work together to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Make yourself available to listen and to talk. Children know when they can come to you for help.
- Help children cope with changes. Help children understand changes that may be happening in their lives.
- Help children understand how to care for themselves and others.

If you suspect your child may have COVID-19, call the healthcare facility to let them know before you come in. If you do not have a healthcare facility, call the nearest hospital.