

Out of the Headlines, **Not Out of Existence**

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 IN 2026?

- Why should you care about COVID-19?
- What are common symptoms today?
- What should you do if you get sick?
- How can you prevent COVID-19?

5 REASONS YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT COVID-19, EVEN IF YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT OR YOU'VE RECOVERED

JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER HAD COVID-19, OR YOU HAD IT BEFORE AND RECOVERED, DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD STOP BEING CONCERNED ABOUT IT



YOU CAN STILL GET SICK

Having never had COVID-19 doesn't make you immune, and recovering from a previous infection doesn't guarantee that you won't get it again.



YOU CAN STILL DEVELOP LONG COVID

Even after a mild infection, some people experience lasting problems such as extreme tiredness, brain fog, headaches, breathing difficulties and sleep problems. You don't necessarily have to be hospitalized before you can develop persistent symptoms. For some people, these symptoms can last for months or even years.



YOU CAN SPREAD IT TO SOMEONE WHO IS MORE VULNERABLE

You might recover easily from COVID-19, but an older relative or someone with certain health conditions may not. What feels like a mild infection to you could become a serious illness for someone else.



PROTECTING YOURSELF ALSO PROTECTS THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

You may be able to spread COVID-19 before you even realize you're infected or before your symptoms become obvious. By the time you start feeling sick, you may have already passed it on to someone else. That's why building safe habits matters.



YOUR NEXT INFECTION MAY NOT AFFECT YOU THE SAME WAY

If you had COVID-19 before and recovered without major problems, that doesn't mean every future infection will be mild. Your previous experience is not a guarantee of how your body will respond the next time.

FIVE PILLARS OF PREVENTION

MASKING

- Wear a high-quality respirator (N95 or better), especially in shared indoor spaces.
- Helps protect you and others from infection.

VENTILATION

- Bring in fresh air and improve indoor airflow.
- Use HEPA air filtration when possible.
- Better air quality means less virus in the air.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Reduce crowding in indoor spaces, and avoid in person meetings.
- Fewer people together means a lower transmission risk.

TESTING

- Get tested when exposed or potentially contagious.
- PCR and LAMP tests are more accurate than rapid antigen tests and detect infection earlier.
- Always take more than one rapid test if the first one is negative.
- Testing helps prevent unknowingly spreading the virus.

VACCINATION

- Stay up to date with recommended vaccines.
- Vaccination helps reduce the risk of severe illness.
- Works best when combined with other prevention measures.



Common symptoms of COVID – 19

Common Symptoms

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Fever or chills
- Digestive symptoms such as upset stomach, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Pain and aches in the head or muscles

When to See a Doctor

- Difficulty breathing
- Ongoing pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Low blood oxygen: Your lips, nail beds, and skin may appear pale, gray, or blue.

How Long Symptoms Last

- Symptoms usually begin 2–6 days after exposure and last up to 2 weeks. They last longer for some people.
- You can be sick and infect other people without getting symptoms or before you notice them.



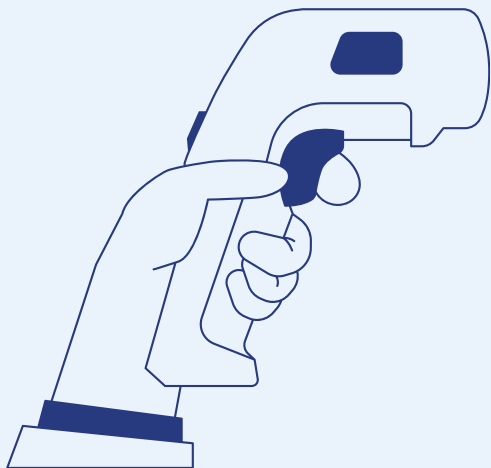
HOW TO REST, FEEL BETTER, & PROTECT OTHERS

At home care



- **MOST PEOPLE RECOVER WITH:**

- Rest
- Fluids
- Treatment for symptoms



- **OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES MAY HELP:**

- Ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever and pain
- Cough medicine

Ask your healthcare provider about Paxlovid or other antiviral treatments. Paxlovid must be started within 5 days of the start of symptoms.



- **HIGHER-RISK GROUPS INCLUDE:**

- Adults 65+
- Babies under 6 months
- People with a variety of chronic conditions or blood disorders



- **CAREGIVERS CAN HELP WITH:**

- Tracking symptoms
- Food and medications
- Childcare
- Pet care

DURING ILLNESS

- Stay home and away from people without COVID-19.
- People with weakened immune systems may need to isolate longer.
- When possible, breathe clean outdoor or filtered air, and direct exhaled air through a filter to reduce virus in the air.
- **To support recovery:**
 - Eat healthy, easy-to-digest foods
 - Get lots of rest
 - Practice relaxation exercises
- Stay connected through phone/video calls
- **Get emergency medical help** for any of the “When to See a Doctor” symptoms.



PREVENTING SPREAD

- Stay home and separate from people and pets. Use a separate bedroom and bathroom if possible.
- Wear a respirator mask around other people.
- Increase airflow/ventilation and air filtration in the home, and don't share air with uninfected housemates.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Avoid sharing:
 - Towels
 - Cups
 - Personal items



SAFER CAREGIVING

- Wear an N95 or better mask
 - When the infected person is or recently was in the room
 - When you share air, even in different rooms
- Avoid contact with the sick person or their bodily fluids.
- Wash your hands after handling used tissues, vomit, poop, or pee.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid cleaning the person's isolation room when possible.
- Avoid any visitors. If anyone must enter the home, provide respirator masks.

FEELING BETTER

- Resting and isolating is important for your health and the health of those around you.
- People can still infect others even two weeks after starting to feel sick or having a positive test without symptoms.
- The gold standard is to isolate for two weeks and end isolation after 2 negative PCR or LAMP tests 24 hours apart. A few studies have suggested that isolation may be reduced to 10–12 days.

Remember the five pillars:

- Masking, clean air, and social distancing are especially important.
- Wear a well-fitting respirator mask, since cloth and surgical masks are less effective.

Even if you tested positive without feeling sick, take the same precautions to protect yourself and others!

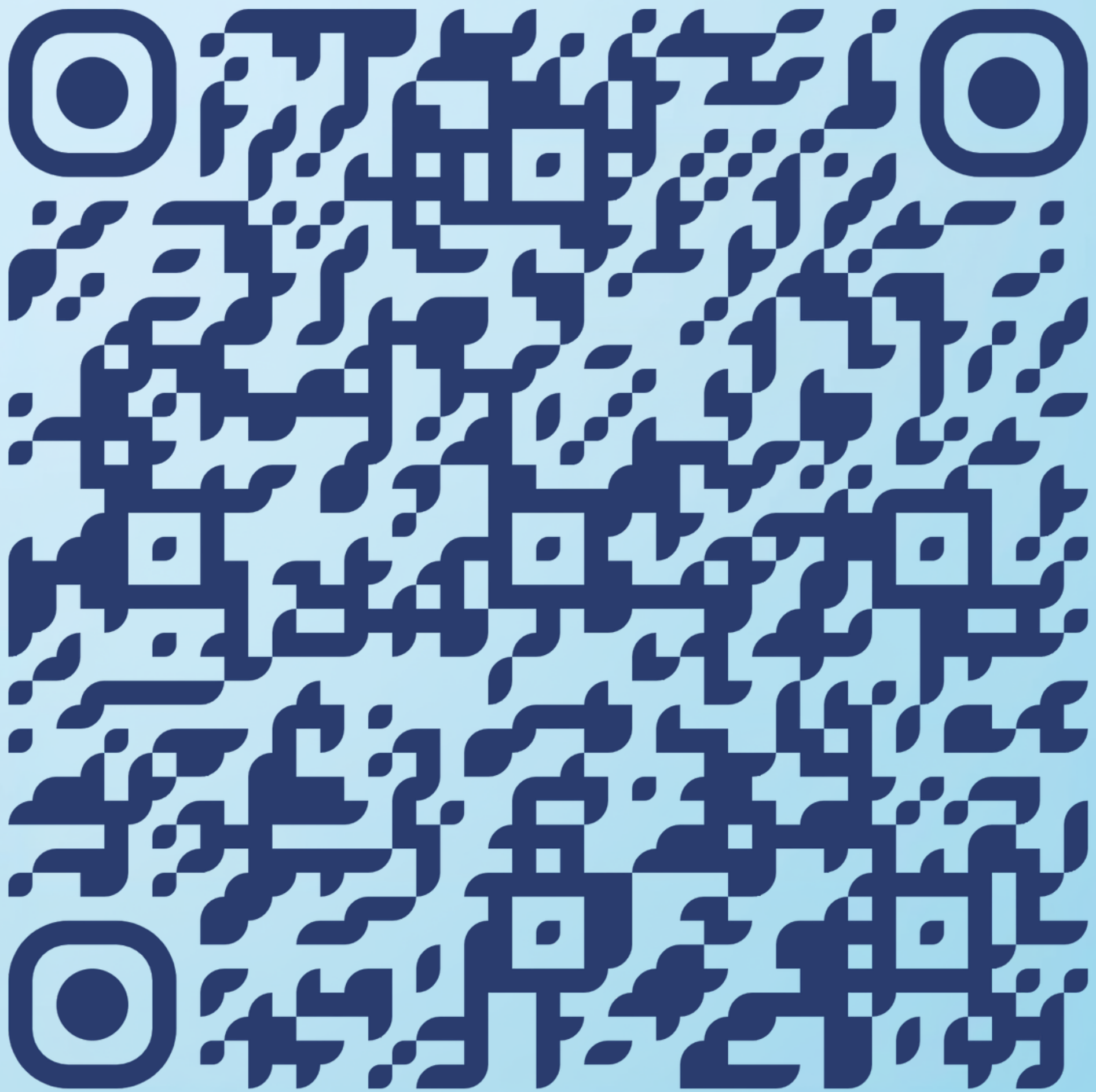


AFTER RECOVERY

- Monitor symptoms that continue or appear after COVID-19.
- Some people experience symptoms for months or develop new health problems. This is called Long COVID. Long COVID can affect anyone, including kids and healthy young people.
- Contact a doctor if symptoms don't improve.
- Protection from previous infection doesn't last or prevent all variants of the virus.
- Practice all five pillars of prevention to reduce future risk, including masking, clean air, social distancing, vaccination, and testing.



SCAN FOR OUR SOURCES



Move forward with awareness, tools, and dedication to your health.