

# New Parent With COVID-19: Care Instructions



## Overview

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COVID-19 is caused by a virus. It can cause a fever, a cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms. COVID-19 mainly spreads through droplets from coughing, sneezing, breathing, and singing. The virus also can spread when people are in close contact with someone who is infected.

Most people have mild symptoms and can take care of themselves at home.

Caring for a baby while you are sick with COVID-19 can be a challenge. You'll want to take care of yourself and keep your baby safe from the virus.

Experts believe that passing the virus to a baby during pregnancy is unlikely. But after birth, a baby can get the virus through person-to-person contact—just like anyone else. That's why if you are sick with COVID-19 when you have your baby, you and your doctor can talk about ways to protect your baby. This includes wearing a well-fitting mask and having your baby sleep in an incubator in your room, rather than in an open bassinet. You and your doctor may decide to have your baby stay in a different hospital room.

Talk to your doctor about how long you, or your baby, will need to stay away from other people. It might be as long as a few weeks.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself and your baby at home?

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- Stay home. Leave your home only if you need to get medical care. But call the doctor's office first so they know you're coming.
- Talk to your doctor about how long you, or your baby, will need to stay away from other people. It might be as long as a few weeks.

- Wear a highly protective mask that fits properly when you are around other people, including your baby. A mask can help slow the spread of the virus. Children under 2 years of age should not wear a mask.
- Limit contact with people in your home. If possible, stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom.
- Avoid contact with pets and other animals. If you can, have a friend or family member care for them while you're sick.
- If you are able, move around as much as possible. Getting out of bed can help prevent blood clots in your legs.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue in the trash right away.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use soap and water, and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Don't share personal household items. These include bedding, towels, cups and glasses, and eating utensils.
- Clean and disinfect your home every day. Use household cleaners or disinfectant wipes or sprays.
- Ask your doctor if you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) to relieve your fever and body aches. Read and follow all instructions on the label.

## Feeding your baby

- Take extra care to avoid passing the infection to your baby.
  - Wash your hands well before you touch your baby.
  - Wear a highly protective mask that fits properly. Wear it anytime you are close to your baby.
- Take care if you pump breast milk or feed your baby with a bottle.
  - Wash your hands well before you touch the pump or bottle.
  - Clean the pump well when you're done, and sanitize your pump and bottles. Read the instructions that came with the pump, or ask for help from your doctor or midwife.
  - If someone else feeds your baby, they should be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines. And they should wash their hands and wear a highly protective mask that fits properly.

## When should you call for help?

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### If you are ill



**Call 911** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if you have life-threatening symptoms, such as:

- You have severe trouble breathing. (You can't talk at all.)
- You have constant chest pain or pressure.
- You are severely dizzy or lightheaded.
- You are confused or can't think clearly.
- You have pale, gray, or blue-colored skin or lips.
- You passed out (lost consciousness) or are very hard to wake up.

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have moderate trouble breathing. (You can't speak a full sentence.)
- You are coughing up blood (more than about 1 teaspoon).
- You have signs of low blood pressure. These include feeling lightheaded; being too weak to stand; and having cold, pale, clammy skin.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your symptoms get worse.
- You are not getting better as expected.

**If you are worried that your baby is ill**, call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care.

## Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **A138** in the search box to learn more about "**New Parent With COVID-19: Care Instructions**".

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