

# Who is at elevated risk for COVID-19?

COVID-19 continues to dominate headlines across the globe. This novel coronavirus first made headlines in late 2019 after an outbreak in Wuhan, the sprawling capital city in China's Hubei province. The virus has since spread beyond China's borders, leading to school closures and changes in public life, such as the shutting down of professional sports leagues, that many might never have thought they would see in their lifetimes.

Despite the relative infancy of COVID-19, doctors have learned much about it, including who might be most at risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, early information out of China revealed that

some groups are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 than others. Older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions are at the greatest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Heart disease, diabetes and lung disease are the chronic medical conditions that appear to make people especially vulnerable to sickness from COVID-19.

## How people in at-risk groups can reduce their risk of getting sick

It's important that elderly people and people with chronic medical conditions take their risk for getting sick from COVID-19 seriously, as the virus had already contributed to thousands of deaths by early March 2020. The CDC notes that it is especially important that people at elevated risk take actions to reduce their risk of getting sick with the disease. The following strategies can be part of a proactive approach that may help at-risk people lower their risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

- Stock up on health supplies. Contact your physician and arrange to obtain extra necessary medications so you do not have to leave your home should an outbreak occur in your area. If that's not plausible, the CDC recommends signing up for mail-order medications. Stock up on over-the-counter medications and medical supplies, including everyday items like tissues, so you don't have to leave the house if an outbreak occurs.
- Stock up on groceries. Make sure you have enough groceries on hand so you can stay at home if restrictions on leaving home are put in place during an outbreak.
- Embrace the basics. Basic strategies like avoiding people who are sick; washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or spending time in public; avoiding touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.; and avoiding crowds can help to reduce your risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

Since the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in China in late-December 2019, doctors have learned that certain people are especially vulnerable to getting sick from the virus. Such people can take certain steps that may reduce their risk of getting sick. More information about COVID-19 is available at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) & [warnerhospital.org](http://warnerhospital.org).



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