

Stay healthy during COVID-19: Don't avoid your doctor

Do not wait any longer to schedule those doctor appointments you have been putting off. Talk to your health-care provider about using telemedicine, if available. Or communicate with your doctor or nurse by phone or e-mail. Here are some ways you can visit your doctor and get treatment during COVID-19.

When should I see a doctor in person?

If you are experiencing a medical issue or change in your health, call to talk through your symptoms with your doctor. Your doctor can advise you on whether your symptoms require going to the office, an urgent care facility, or emergency department.

If you experience any of these symptoms, call 911 as they will warrant an in-person visit:

- Chest pain, pressure in your chest, shortness of breath, or other heart attack symptoms
- Sudden numbness, weakness, confusion, loss of vision, or other stroke symptoms
- Difficulty breathing
- Heavy bleeding
- Significant injury or trauma
- High fever
- Possible broken bones

How do I visit my doctor in-person safely?

If you must visit in-person, notify your health-care provider before your visit and follow their instructions. Guidelines for visiting your doctor can include different steps.

- Before your appointment, you may get a call from someone at the clinic asking if you have symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you have symptoms, they may give you specific instructions.
- Most clinics require you to cover your mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face covering during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you do not have one, your clinic may be able to provide you with one.
- Some clinics have restrictions on the number of people who can be in the office and ask that you bring only one person with you to your appointment if necessary.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while at the clinic, including the waiting area and lines. Many health-care providers have you check-in over the phone and wait for appointments in your vehicle. A clinic staff member will call or come get you from your car when they are ready for your appointment.
- When paying, use touchless payment methods if possible.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

When should I take my child to the doctor?

Talk to your pediatrician about what visits you can do in-person and which you can do over the phone or by other means. During the current health crisis, we need to keep our communities safe from vaccine-preventable diseases; therefore, it is essential to keep up with well-child visits and immunizations.

How do I pick up my prescriptions?

If possible, call prescription orders in ahead of time. Use drive-thru windows, curbside services (wait in your car until the prescription is ready), mail order, or other delivery services. If you must go inside, wear a cloth face covering, stay at least 6 feet away from others while inside and in lines, and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home. Be sure to keep up-to-date lists of medical conditions and medications, and periodically check to ensure you have a sufficient supply of your prescription and over-the-counter medications.

References:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/doctor-visits-medicine.html>
- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/dont-avoid-your-doctor-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

Source:

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