

# Advance Care Planning During the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

## About COVID-19

This is a difficult and scary time with COVID-19 (coronavirus) — this is different from any other situation we have ever faced. We want to provide you the best care possible in the way you want to receive care.

We encourage you to think about what is most important to you during this time and to talk with your health care provider and loved ones about your wishes.

Use this guide to understand how COVID-19 could affect your health.

## How do you get it?

The virus is thought to spread from person-to-person:

- who are in close contact with each other
- through respiratory droplets in the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.

Recent studies suggest it may be spread these ways in people who are not showing symptoms.

## How do you treat COVID-19?

There is no cure for COVID-19. All you can do is treat the symptoms.

## Who is at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and may need life support?

### People:

- age 65 years or older
- living in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- who have at least one of these:
  - chronic (long-term) lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - serious heart conditions
  - a disease that weakens your immune system (such as cancer, lupus or HIV)
  - diabetes
  - severe obesity
  - kidney dialysis
  - liver disease.

## Where can you learn more?

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- Minnesota Department of Health COVID hotline at 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903 (7 a.m. to 7 p.m.)
- Allina Health at [allinahealth.org/coronavirus](https://allinahealth.org/coronavirus).

## Questions to Think About

Most people who get COVID-19 get better on their own. However, people who are older or have other health problems, like the ones listed on the first page, can get very sick and may not survive.

The treatments used to try to help people live, such as breathing machines and intensive care, are not guaranteed to work.

You can make some decisions about your health care now in case you become very sick and are unable to speak for yourself. (See the box at the right.)

If you need more information, go to:

- Allina Health: [allinahealth.org/acp](https://allinahealth.org/acp)
- Respecting Choices®: [respectingchoices.org](https://respectingchoices.org)
- Honoring Choices: [honoringchoices.org](https://honoringchoices.org)
- Minnesota Medical Association: [mnmed.org/polst](https://mnmed.org/polst).

**This document does not replace your current health care directive or POLST form.**

**If this form contains information that is different from your current document, including your health care agent, please complete a new one. You can fill out a new health care directive from [allinahealth.org/acp](https://allinahealth.org/acp).**

**Contact your health care provider if you need to update your POLST.**

What would be most important for your health care providers or loved ones to know if you became very sick and couldn't speak for yourself?

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Choose someone you trust to make decisions for you on your behalf. This person acts as your health care agent. Have you chosen a person who would do this for you? If not, who could do this for you?

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Some people decide to avoid treatments like breathing machines or CPR if they may not help or may cause suffering. Have you thought about your priorities for medical care if you were to become very sick? Examples:

- live as long as possible, even if that means being in the hospital to receive all the care my doctors think will help. I may need to rely on machines to stay alive.
- live longer if I can keep the quality of life and comfort I want. I may need to go to the hospital, stop any treatments that do not work or make me feel worse, or allow a natural death if my heart stops beating or I stop breathing.
- live the rest of my life focusing on my comfort and quality of life. I want to avoid the hospital and allow a natural death if my heart stops beating or I stop breathing.

What worries you when you think about getting sick with COVID-19?

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**This document can only be used until Dec. 31, 2020.**

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