

COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus)

Information for People Living with HIV

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus) is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus that has not been found in people before. It can lead to lower respiratory illnesses like pneumonia and bronchitis.¹

How is COVID-19 spread?

- Close contact with an infected person (within 6 feet of you)
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Contact with infected surfaces or objects then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes²

Am I at risk?

- If you are on stable anti-retroviral therapy and have a normal CD4 T-cell count, you have little to no increased risk for becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.^{3,4}
- If you have a low CD4 count—indicating a weakened immune system—you are at higher risk of becoming ill.^{3,4}
- Of those with a low CD4 count, older people and those with medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, renal disease, or diabetes have an even higher risk of becoming ill.^{4,5}



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What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.⁶

There is a possibility that symptoms may appear differently for those with compromised immune systems, i.e. symptoms may be fewer and milder in the early stages of the virus but the level of disease present may be more severe, so it is important that you and your doctor are aware and observant.^{3,7}

How can I prepare for COVID-19?

- Ensure you have an ample medication supply
 - 30 days supply at all times
- Keep vaccinations up to date
 - Influenza and pneumococcal
- Establish plans for clinical care if isolated or quarantined
 - Telemedicine options
 - Physician online portals
- Maintain a social network with family and friends remotely
 - Social contact helps us stay mentally healthy and fights boredom.
 - Still, even if they may not seem ill, it is important to not have contact with others who can spread the virus.⁵

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

- Call ahead before visiting your doctor – DO NOT go to the clinic or hospital without calling ahead first.
- Monitor your symptoms. Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening.
- Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms except to get medical care.
- Wear a face mask if you have symptoms.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.
- Avoid sharing personal household items.⁸

If you are concerned you have symptoms of COVID-19, or if you have questions regarding this disease, contact your local health department.

“People living with HIV are resilient. We have worked together tirelessly for quality of life and better health outcomes and will continue to do so.”

Rico Gustav, Executive Director
Global Network of People Living with HIV

Have local resources specifically dealing with COVID-19?

Below is space provided for listing all resources available to our communities.

See example list of local resources.

List of local resources

Washington State Department of Health

(206) 418-5500

Washington State DOH HIV Client Services

(877) 376-9316

Washington Information Network: Health, Human Services and Legal Resources

206-461-3200 / 2-1-1

King County Health Department HIV/STD Department

(206) 263-2000

Gay City

(206) 860-6969



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References

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- ² How COVID-19 Spreads. (2020, February 28). Retrieved March 3, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>
- ³ UPDATED: What People With HIV Need to Know About the New Coronavirus. (2020, March 10). Retrieved from <https://www.poz.com/article/people-hiv-need-know-new-coronavirus>
- ⁴ Coronavirus risk not significantly greater for those with 'well controlled' HIV. (2020, March 9). Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2020/03/09/coronavirus-risk-not-significantly-greater-for-those-with-well-controlled-hiv/>
- ⁵ CROI Aud D3b. (2020, March 10). Retrieved from <https://special.croi.capitalreach.com/>
- ⁶ Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). (2020, February 29). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>
- ⁷ Download BHIVA apps. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.bhiva.org/comment-on-COVID-19-from-BHIVA>
- ⁸ Prevention and Treatment. (2020, February 15). Retrieved March 3, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- ⁹ Lessons learnt from the HIV response for COVID-19: Building community resilience. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.gnpplus.net/lessons-learnt-from-the-hiv-response-for-covid-19-building-community-resilience/>

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