

Respiratory Illnesses

What to do when you are sick



When you are sick with a respiratory virus, you can spread it to others. How long you can spread the virus depends on different factors, including how sick you are and how long you are sick. This is not the same for everyone. The good news is there are actions you can take to help protect yourself and others from health risks caused by common respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, flu, and RSV.

Respiratory Virus Symptoms

fever



cough



fatigue



runny nose



chills



headache



When you are sick with a respiratory virus:

- ✓ If you think you think you have a respiratory virus, stay home and away from other people (including people you live with who are not sick).
- ✓ Talk to a health care provider about testing and treatment if you are at risk for getting very sick because of your age or a condition such as pregnancy.
- ✓ You can go back to your normal activities when, **for at least 24 hours**, both are true:
 - Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
 - You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

For 5 days after your symptoms are getting better:

- ✓ When you go back to your normal activities, take added precaution over the next 5 days, such as:
 - Opening windows to bring in fresh air or moving activities outdoors
 - Washing your hands often
 - Wearing a mask around others
 - Physical distancing
 - Testing (if possible) before spending time around other people indoors

Learn more at [cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/index.html).

