

# For People Living in Prisons and Jails

Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/living-prisons-jails.html>

## Protect yourself from getting sick with COVID-19.

This resource contains recommendations for people in prisons and jails. CDC acknowledges it may be difficult to maintain physical distancing and avoid crowds in these settings.

## Living in prisons and jails puts you at higher risk for getting COVID-19 because

- There may not be enough space to keep people with COVID-19 away from others.
- You may be sharing space with someone who has the virus and does not know it, because they do not show symptoms.
- Staff or visitors may have the virus and not know it.

## About COVID-19

- Many people who have COVID-19 do not feel sick.
- People who feel sick may experience signs and symptoms that include:
  - » Fever or chills
  - » Cough
  - » Shortness of breath or having a hard time breathing
  - » Feeling tired
  - » Muscle or body aches
  - » Headache
  - » New loss of taste or smell
  - » Sore throat
  - » Congestion (stuffy) or runny nose
  - » Nausea or vomiting
  - » Diarrhea

Take these steps to beat COVID-19



Get a vaccine.



Wear a mask.



Physically distance as much as possible.



Wash your hands.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## How COVID-19 Spreads

- When a person with COVID-19 breathes, coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings and droplets from their nose or mouth fall on a healthy person, they may spread COVID-19. Keep physical distance and wear a mask.
- COVID-19 may get on your hands if you touch things. Wash your hands often.

## People at Risk For COVID-19

- Anyone can get infected.
- If you have any of the health issues below, it is extra important to protect yourself and get a COVID-19 vaccine:
  - » Cancer
  - » Chronic kidney disease
  - » Chronic liver disease
  - » Chronic lung diseases
  - » Dementia or other neurological conditions
  - » Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
  - » Down syndrome
  - » Heart problems
  - » HIV infection
  - » Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system)
  - » Mental health conditions
  - » Overweight and obesity
  - » Pregnancy
  - » Sickle cell disease or thalassemia
  - » Smoking (current or former)
  - » Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
  - » Stroke or cerebrovascular disease
  - » Substance use disorders
  - » Tuberculosis
- You are also more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 if you are
  - » An older adult (50 years and older)
  - » A member of a racial or ethnic minority group
  - » Someone with a disability

## Protect Yourself and Others

- Vaccines can help keep you from getting sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19. Get a vaccine as soon as you can.
- Maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet (2 arm lengths) from others.
  - » Avoid crowds and try to distance yourself as much as possible, including during these activities:
    - Recreation, especially when inside
    - Mealtime (if in a dining area with people from other units)
    - Walking in hallways
- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth, especially when around staff or people from a different housing unit.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not immediately available.
  - » After touching your mask
  - » Before touching your face
  - » After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
  - » After using the bathroom
  - » Before eating
  - » Before and after making food
  - » Before taking medicine

## Common Spaces

- Go outside for your recreation time if you can.
- Sleep head to foot if there is more than one bed in a room.
- If visitors are allowed, visitors may be screened for COVID-19 and asked to wear a mask.
  - » Visitors may not be able to enter the building if they do not clear the screening process (for example, a temperature check), or if they decline to be screened.

## If You Were Near Someone with COVID-19

- You may be tested for the virus even if you do not feel sick.
- You may be sent to an area away from others. This is called quarantine.
  - » Quarantine separates people who were exposed to COVID-19 to see if they become sick.
  - » This room may be a single cell or a large area with others.
  - » Quarantine helps prevent you from getting or spreading the virus to others.

## What to Do if You Feel Sick

- Tell a correctional officer or staff member if you feel sick so you can get medical care.
- You may be sent to an area by yourself. This is called medical isolation.
  - » Medical isolation separates people who may have COVID-19 from people who are not sick. This is so you don't get others sick.
  - » This room may be a single cell or a large area with others who are also sick.
  - » Medical isolation is not to punish you.
- You may be tested for COVID-19.
  - » If your test is positive, showing you have COVID-19, you will need to stay in medical isolation for at least 10 days.
  - » If your test is negative, but you were near someone with COVID-19, you may be sent to a quarantine area to see if you develop COVID-19.
    - A negative test result means that you probably did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing or that it was too early in your infection.
    - You could be exposed to COVID-19 after being tested.
    - You may be tested again.

## Additional Resources from CDC

Visit CDC's COVID-19 website ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)) for more information on the following topics:

- [COVID-19 Recommendations for Older Adults](#)
- [How COVID-19 Spreads](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- [People with Certain Medical Conditions](#)
- [Quarantine and Isolation](#)
- [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- [Vaccines for COVID-19](#)
- [When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)
- [Your Guide to Masks](#)