

Self-care Guide

Managing mild and
post-COVID-19 recovery at home



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The purpose of this guide

Whether you have tested positive yourself, or caring for someone who is, or even recovering from COVID-19, this guide will help you manage mild and post-COVID-19 recovery at home, guided by research, knowledge and best medical practices.

If you need further clarification or information, visit

pantai.com.my

Stay safe!

COVID-19: What is it?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is defined as an infectious illness caused by a novel coronavirus known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV-2).

Anyone, regardless of age may get infected but research has shown that those with underlying medical conditions (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer) are more likely to get seriously ill, and for some it could be fatal.



COVID-19 Delta variant

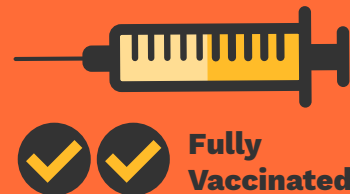
The virus that causes COVID-19 is mutating constantly, and new variants of the virus are expected to occur over time. Sometimes new variants emerge and disappear but some like Delta persist.

The Delta variant is highly contagious, 2x more contagious than previous variants, and was first identified in India around October 2020. The World Health Organisation calls this variant “the fastest and the fittest”. Some data suggest that the Delta variant may cause more severe illness than previous variants in unvaccinated people.

Other new variants of interest (VOI) which are currently being monitored closely by WHO are Lambda and Mu.

Important note: *Unvaccinated people face the greatest risk of transmission. They are more likely to get infected, and therefore transmit the virus.*

Get yourself fully vaccinated now to protect yourself and your loved ones.



Transmission: Do your part in reducing the spread

The COVID-19 virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when he or she coughs, sneezes, speaks, sings or breathes. Hence it is important to observe the following to reduce the risk of infection:



Vaccine

Get vaccinated when a vaccine is made available to you



Proper cough etiquette

Cough into a flexed elbow



Keep a safe distance

Stay at least 6 feet from others even when the person doesn't appear to be ill



Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based rub, frequently



Wear a mask

Wear a properly-fitted mask especially when physical distancing is not possible, or when in a poorly-ventilated place



Feeling unwell? Stay home

Do stay home and self-isolate until you recover

COVID-19 symptoms

A wide range of symptoms have been reported, from mild to severe. These may appear 5 – 14 days after exposure.



Fever or chills



Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing



Cough



Muscle or body aches



Headache



Loss of taste or smell



Sore throat



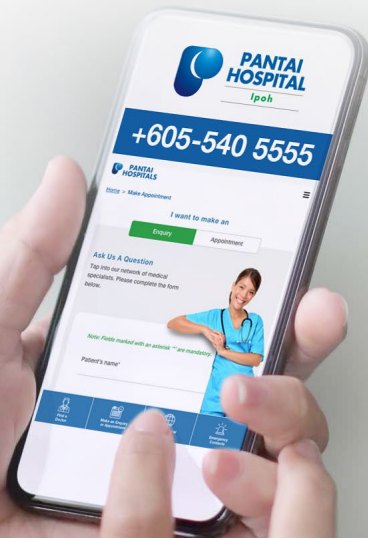
Congestion or runny nose



Nausea or vomiting



Diarrhoea



Seek emergency medical care immediately when someone shows any of these warning signs:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion
- Inability to stay awake
- Pale, grey, or blue-coloured skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

Always call ahead before visiting your doctor or health facility

When do symptoms show?

On average, within 5 to 6 days. However, there have been instances when symptoms only appeared after 14 days.

Types of COVID-19 tests

There are currently two types of COVID-19 tests being used by the health authorities worldwide to detect the virus. The two tests are:

Molecular tests

Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests to detect a virus' genetic material.

Antigen tests

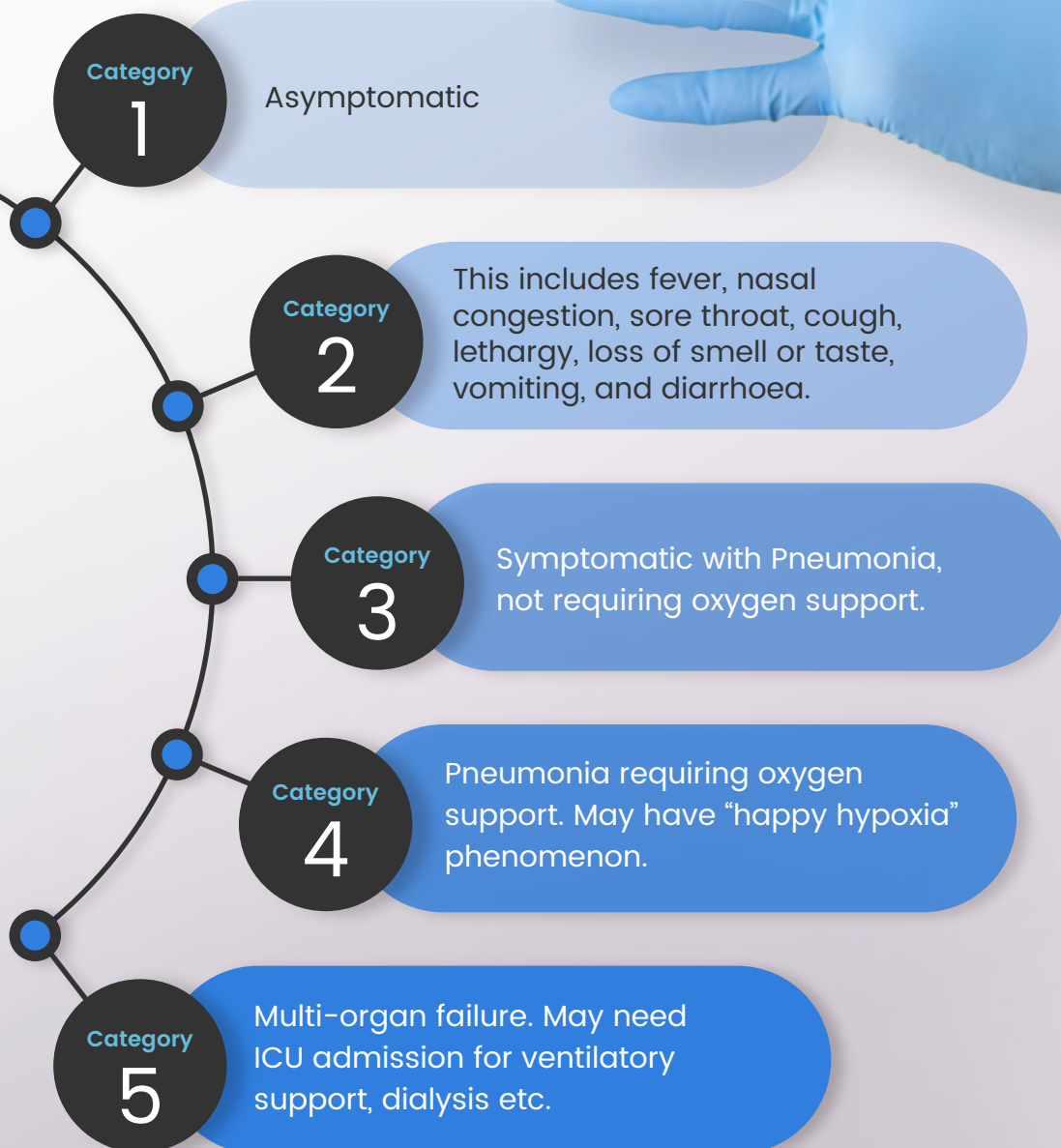
Rapid test kit (RTK-Ag) tests to detect specific proteins on the surface of the virus.

To help you understand the function of each test, here's a helpful comparison of the tests currently available:

| Types of COVID-19 Tests | Molecular Tests (RT-PCR) | Antigen Tests (RTK-Ag) |
|--|---|---|
| Also known as | Diagnostic test, viral test, molecular test, nucleic acid test, amplification test (NAAT), RT-PCR test | Rapid Diagnostic Test, usually available as a self-test kit <i>(because the turnaround is often quicker than an RNA test)</i> |
| How is the test conducted | Commonly conducted by healthcare professional | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available as a self-test kit• Can also be conducted by a healthcare professional |
| How is the sample taken | Nasal or throat swab or saliva | Nasal or throat swab or saliva |
| How long does it take for results | Same day (some locations) or may be up to a week | One hour or less |
| Is another test needed | This test is highly accurate, usually does not require a second | Positive – highly accurate Negative – may need to be confirmed with a molecular test |
| What it shows | Diagnoses active coronavirus infection | Diagnoses active coronavirus infection |
| What it can't do | Within the 90 days of someone contracting COVID-19 and getting treated; it won't be able to test if a person has recovered or not | It won't be able to rule out active coronavirus infection <i>(antigen tests are more likely to miss an active coronavirus infection, compared to molecular tests)</i> |

Understanding COVID-19 categories

According to the Ministry of Health Malaysia, COVID-19 patients fall into five categories. Those in Categories 1 and 2 generally do not require hospitalisation, as these cases are regarded as mild. However, those in Categories 3 – 5 are considered serious cases and often require hospitalisation.



Types of vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines help develop an immune response to the SARS CoV-2. This immunity means there is a reduced risk of developing the illness and therefore suffering its consequences, helping your body fight the virus if exposed. The Ministry of Health Malaysia has found that the following vaccines* meet their strict criteria for efficacy and safety:

AstraZeneca / Oxford (UK)

CanSinoBio (China)

Johnson & Johnson / Janssen (USA)

Moderna (USA)

Pfizer / BioNTech (USA)














Sinopharm (China)

Sinovac (China)

**as of 20 August 2021, Ministry of Health Malaysia*



Vaccine overview

| Vaccine | Who can get it? | How many doses do you need? | When are you fully vaccinated? | Is it suitable for children/teenagers? |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Pfizer / BioNTech | 12 years and older |  2 doses  3 weeks apart |  2 weeks after 2nd shot | Recommended <i>*Rare incidence of myocarditis and pericarditis reported</i> |
| AstraZeneca / Oxford | 18 years and older |  2 doses  8 - 12 weeks apart | | |
| CanSinoBio | |  2 doses  3 - 4 weeks apart | | No data available |
| Johnson & Johnson | |  1 dose | | |
| Sinovac | Recommended for those 60 & above |  2 doses  2 - 4 weeks apart |  2 weeks after 2nd shot | Approved as alternative when Pfizer/BioNTech is contraindicated |
| Moderna Biotech | Recommended for those 60 & above, and 50 and below |  2 doses  28 days apart | | Not yet approved for use in Malaysia |
| Sinopharm | Recommended for those 50 & below | | | Not recommended |

| Population | Pfizer/BioNTech | AstraZeneca/Oxford | CanSinoBio | Johnson & Johnson | Sinovac | Moderna Biotech | Sinopharm |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Children / Teenagers | Recommended | No data available | No data available | No data available | Approved as alternative when Pfizer is contraindicated | Not yet approved for use in Malaysia | Not recommended |
| Persons below 50 years old | Recommended | Recommended when other vaccines are not available | No data available | Recommended when other vaccines are not available | Recommended | Recommended | Recommended |
| Older patients over 60 years old | Recommended | Recommended | Awaiting safety data to be tested and compiled | Recommended | Recommended | Recommended | Insufficient evidence to recommend |
| Pregnancy | Recommended <i>Preferred vaccine in view of the best available safety data</i> | Not contraindicated in pregnancy | Limited safety data | Limited safety data | Not contraindicated in pregnancy | Recommended <i>Preferred vaccine in view of the best available safety data</i> | Not contraindicated in pregnancy |
| Breastfeeding | Not contraindicated in breastfeeding | Not contraindicated in breastfeeding | Limited safety data | Limited safety data | Not contraindicated in breastfeeding | Not contraindicated in breastfeeding | Not contraindicated in breastfeeding |
| Fertility | No association with infertility | No association with infertility | Limited safety data | Limited safety data | No association with infertility | No association with infertility | No association with infertility |

What to do if you test positive for COVID-19

For individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and diagnosed as Categories 1 or 2 (mild), this next step is crucial to contain the spread of this highly-contagious disease. Follow the guide below:

Tested positive but no symptoms

Stay home and avoid physical contact with other people for at least 7 days.



Tested positive, with symptoms

The recommendation is to not be in the company of others for at least 7 days from the first appearance of symptoms. After this period, you can be in the company of others, provided you have no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). Also, other symptoms must have improved.

The loss of taste and smell may persist for a few weeks after recovery – this need not delay the end of isolation.

Stay safe. Follow SOPs.

Most people who are infected by COVID-19 will experience mild illness and can recover at home.*

HOWEVER, do not leave your home, except to get medical care. And of course, no visitors.



Distance yourself from others

If you don't live alone, then stay in your room. If possible, use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people, in or outside of your home, wear a mask even while maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet. You do not need to wear one if you are alone.

Do not share personal items eg utensils, plates, cups, towels.



Inform your close contacts*

An infected person can start spreading the virus 48 hours before showing symptoms. By letting your close contacts know, you are helping to protect everyone.



Rest and hydrate

Taking care of yourself is crucial to recovery. Make sure that you drink lots of water.

There are over-the-counter medications you can take to help you feel better.



Be strict about maintaining hygiene

Clean and disinfect frequently-touched areas as often as possible.

*Source: World Health Organisation. https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_3

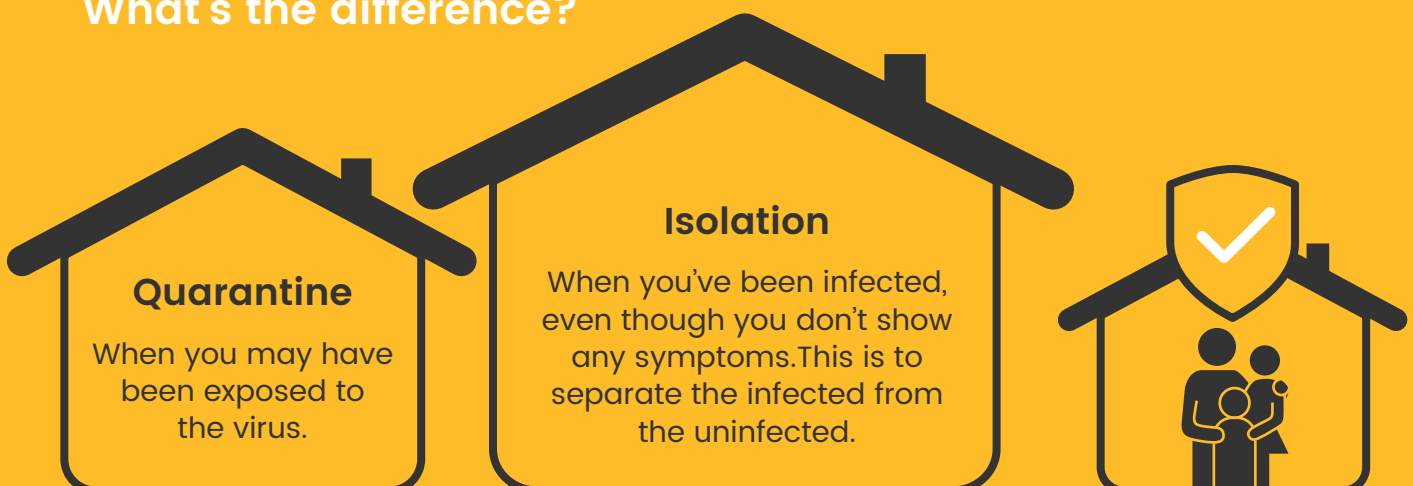
Monitor your symptoms

These include fever, cough and the others identified on page 11. Follow the instructions given by your doctor or healthcare provider. Also, check in regularly on the MySejahtera app.

How long should I stay home?

At least 14 days after your last contact with the person who had COVID-19.

Quarantine or Isolation? What's the difference?



Your home isolation self-care kit

Here's a list of items that you should have available while recovering at home.



Disposable tissues, antibacterial wipes and sanitisers



Sufficient prescription and non-prescription medication to last two weeks



First aid kit, thermometer and paracetamol (to help reduce fever)



Healthy snacks



Identify a support system – friends, family who can help with grocery shopping, supplies and food

What to do when you have COVID-19 symptoms

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Fever | Take paracetamol 1000 mg every 6 hours, no more than 4 times a day. |
| Runny nose | Antihistamine is recommended but do not exceed three times a day. Nasal decongestion sprays are also an option. |
| Sore throat | Gargle with Thymol or Difflam 15ml, 3 times a day. Or, gargle with salt water or take some lozenges. |
| Cough | Cough syrup will help. However, no more than 3 times a day. |

Note:

Continue taking your prescribed medications. Supplements are also permitted.

Antibiotics:

Not required as COVID-19 is not a bacterial infection.

Useful equipment to have at home

Pulse oximeter

A pulse oximeter is a noninvasive device that measures a person's blood oxygen levels. Someone with COVID-19 can have very low oxygen levels but otherwise appear well. This is known as "happy hypoxia." It's concerning because this patient may be more significantly ill than he/she feels.

If a person has a mild case of COVID-19 and is self-treating at home, an oximeter can be a helpful tool for checking oxygen levels so that low oxygen levels can be caught early.

However, do note that a normal oxygen level does not mean a person is free of COVID-19 infection. It is best to have a COVID-19 test done to confirm the infection.

Can an oximeter help detect COVID-19 early?

In general, people who are theoretically more at risk of oxygen issues are those with pre-existing lung disease, heart disease and/or obesity, as well as active smokers.

In addition, since "happy hypoxia" can be present in people who might otherwise be regarded as asymptomatic, a pulse oximeter can help ensure that this clinically silent early warning sign is not missed.



Help your body heal

The immune system needs all the help it can get to fight the virus. Good nutrition and exercise are two ways to do this.

Eat well, eat right

This can't be said often enough – drink lots of water, keep your body hydrated.

- Limit your intake of salt, sugar and fat.
- Avoid large amounts of coffee and tea, caffeinated soft drinks and energy drinks. These could lead to dehydration and affect your sleep patterns.
- Reduce – better yet, avoid – alcohol. It affects your state of mind and makes you vulnerable to falls and injuries. It is also known to heighten feelings of depression, anxiety and fear which are sometimes present especially during isolation and self-quarantine.
- A good, healthy diet will also aid the efficacy of the supplements and medication that you take.

Keep active

Here are a few ways to keep the mind and body occupied. These are home-based examples that require no special equipment and can be done even in a limited space.



Walking

Walk around the house. Staircases add an element of challenge to the walker too. Even just standing up and sitting down repeatedly is a form of exercise.



Online exercise classes

So many to choose from! They are available in a range of difficulties, and types – but do take it a step at a time, especially if you're a beginner.



Relax

Close your eyes. Be aware of your breathing, focus on that. Let your body relax and allow the mind to release all other thoughts. Do this for 5 to 10 minutes each day. It will help clear your mind, and hopefully ground your intentions too.



Hobbies

Stay occupied by starting a new hobby, or going back to an old one. Start a jigsaw puzzle. Learn to play a ukulele. In short, do something that doesn't rely on the internet or watching the television.

Caring for a child who has COVID-19

The general advice for home-based self-care outlined earlier still applies.

However, do note that some children have symptoms that are caused by inflammation, showing up even several weeks after infection.

This is known as **multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)**. They may have trouble breathing, experience pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips or face, confusion, and/or have trouble staying awake. If this happens, please contact your doctor for further advice as they may require hospitalisation.

As of 1 October 2021, research has yet to uncover the reason why this happens only to children.

Symptoms of MIS-C include:

- Fever, tiredness
- Belly pain
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Neck pain
- Rash
- Red eyes
- Red & cracked lips
- Swollen hands or feet
- Swollen glands (lymph nodes)



Caring for an elderly person who has COVID-19

The general advice for home-based self-care outlined earlier still applies.

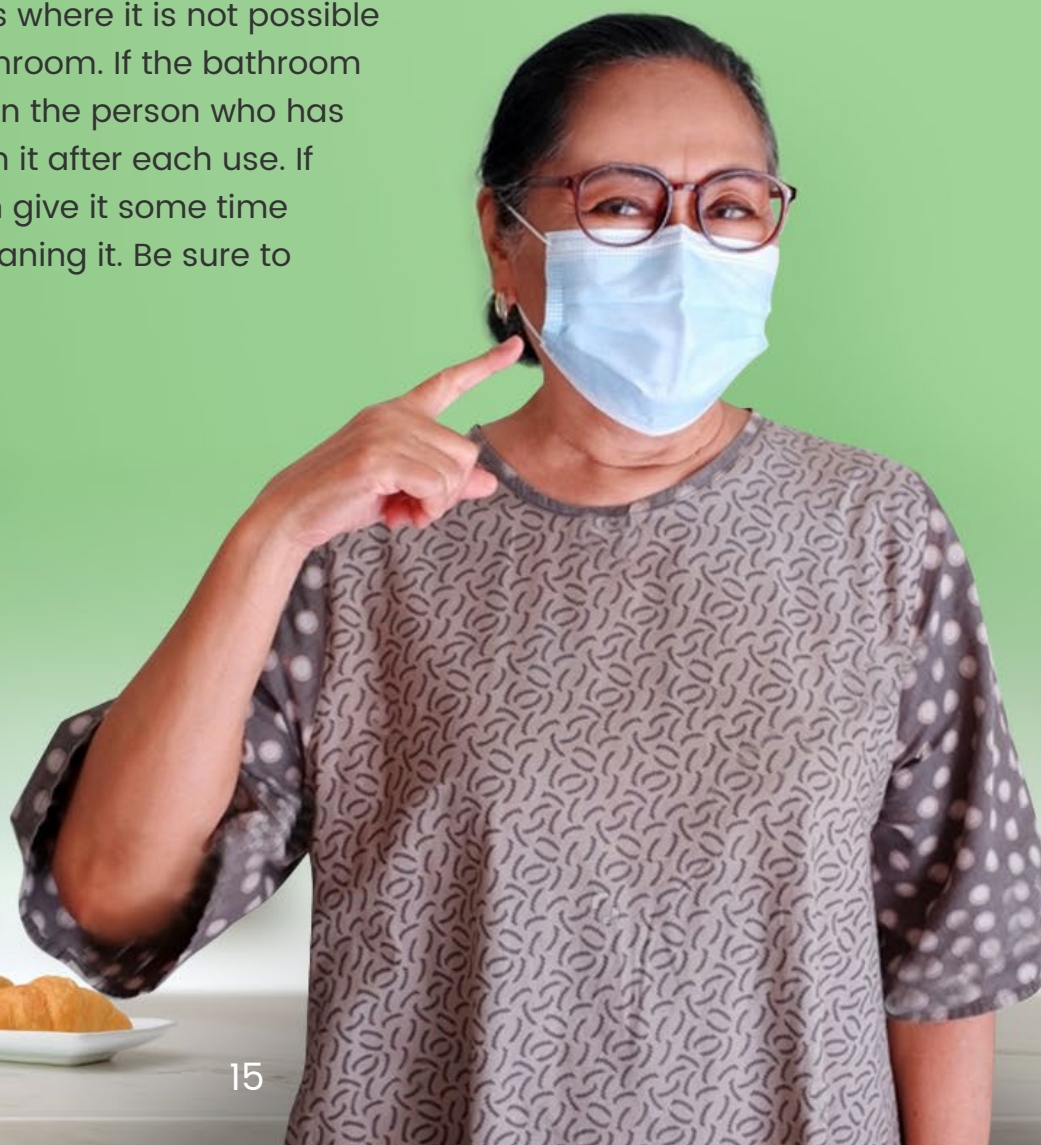
However, depending on the age and physical condition of the elderly person, the primary caregiver may need to monitor his or her hygiene behaviour, as well as food and water consumption.

It is advised that the caregiver wears a mask when attending to the elderly person.

If the caregiver has to assist with the patient's personal hygiene, then wear gloves as well if possible and wash hands immediately after.

If the elderly person uses any assistive aids – a walking frame for example – be sure to clean it after each use, or as frequently as possible.

There may be situations where it is not possible to have a separate bathroom. If the bathroom needs to be shared, then the person who has just used it should clean it after each use. If this is not possible, then give it some time before entering and cleaning it. Be sure to wear gloves and mask.



I'm pregnant and tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

Current research hasn't been able to confirm if the coronavirus can spread to the foetus while it's in the womb. The virus has not been found in amniotic fluid or breast milk. However, there have been cases where newborns of mothers with coronavirus have tested positive for COVID-19. Doctors recommend that even healthy babies born to mothers with coronavirus should be tested. This will help determine the type of care needed for the newborn.

Can a newborn catch the virus?

Yes. However, doctors do not recommend separating the newborn from the infected mother unless she is too ill to care for the child.

All standard SOPs apply while caring for or breastfeeding the baby. Wear a mask and wash hands regularly with soap & water or clean hands with alcohol-based sanitisers.

Note: While the virus has not been detected in breast milk, there is always a chance that there will be respiratory droplets present while breastfeeding the baby. Therefore, it is important for the mother to wear a mask.



It is best that the infected mother keeps her distance from her newborn whenever possible, until the recommended isolation period is over.



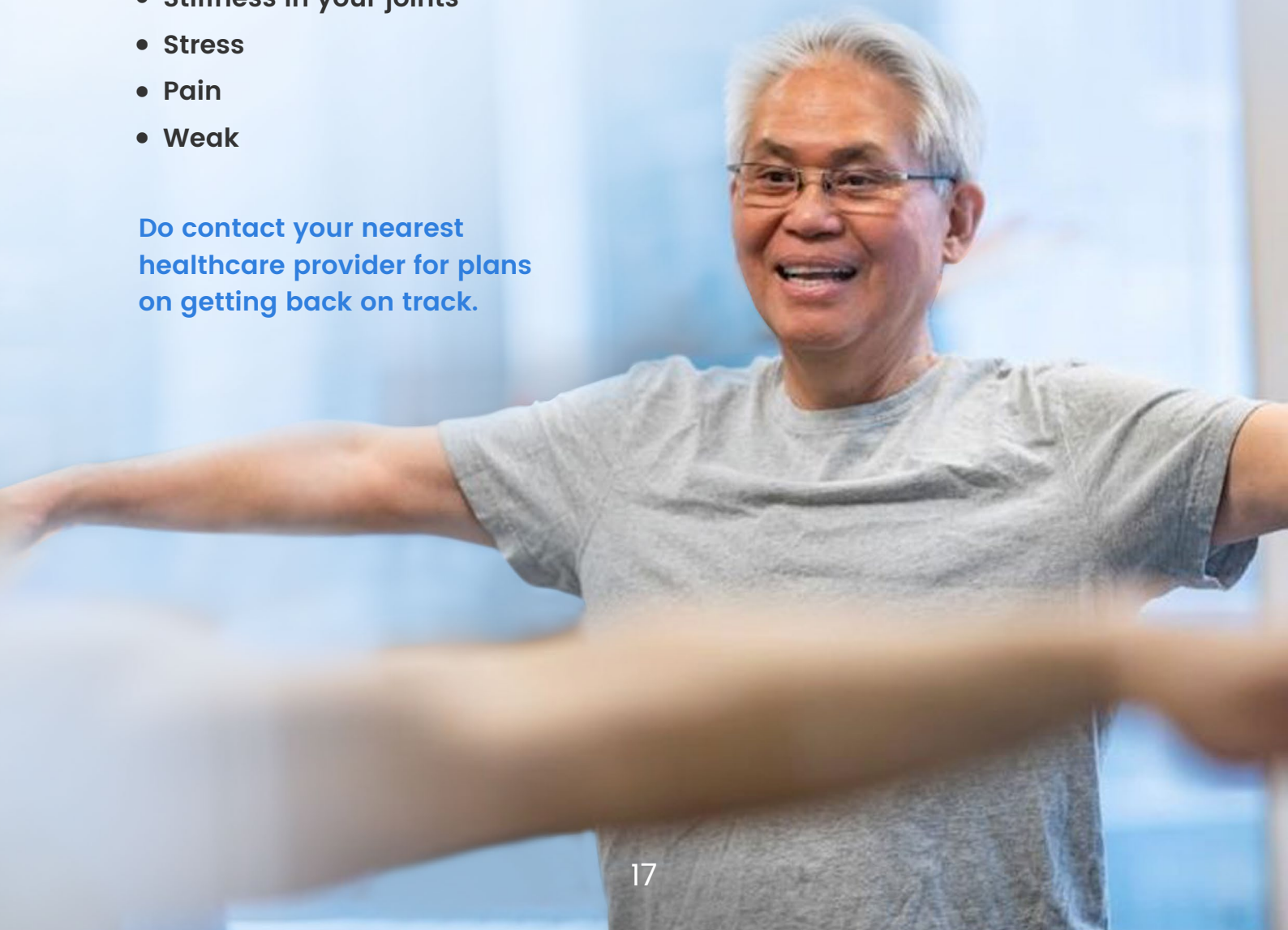
I've recovered. Do I need post-COVID care?

For some patients, recovery doesn't end with the disappearance of a fever. Post-COVID (or Long COVID) recovery can be a long process for those who have suffered the severe form, and they may require help getting back to some level of wellness. This phase of recovery may include occupational and physical therapy, dietary support, low-flow oxygen therapy for those who remain oxygen-dependent, and nursing care.

Are you still feeling any of these?

- **Persistent tiredness**
- **Difficulty breathing, with the presence of phlegm**
- **Stiffness in your joints**
- **Stress**
- **Pain**
- **Weak**

Do contact your nearest healthcare provider for plans on getting back on track.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Should I sanitise my home if someone who tested positive has been in my home?

Yes, especially if that person has been in your home in the last 24 hours. Disinfectant kills the germs on surfaces and helps reduce the spread.

Always follow the instructions on the label of the disinfectant that you use.

Clean visibly dirty surfaces with a household cleaner containing soap or detergent before disinfecting.

Do this if your disinfectant does not have a cleaning agent (check label to verify).

Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with the disinfectant for a certain period of time (check “contact time” on the label).

During the disinfection process, keep the area well-ventilated by opening doors and windows, and use a fan to help with air flow.

Immediately remove your gloves and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after disinfection.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>

2. Do we need to disinfect our groceries etc when we bring them home?

- The most likely way to get COVID-19 is through close contact with someone who is ill, via the infected respiratory droplets.
- So you're more likely to get infected by someone in the supermarket than from your groceries. However, it is always prudent to exercise caution whenever possible.
- Research has shown that while the virus can survive on certain surfaces for a period of time, it also shows that the virus degrades rapidly during that time.
- This study does not examine how long the virus remains on food, but bear this in mind: You should always wash your fruit and vegetables properly, and cook meat to the minimum recommended cooking temperature.

- Food that comes in a can or box, or a factory-sealed package should be considered safe from coronavirus contamination. However, you may want to wipe down the exterior of the packaging with disinfectant, to be safe.
 - When you return home with groceries, be sure to use a household cleaner or a diluted bleach solution to disinfect kitchen surfaces once you're done unpacking and putting them away. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
-

Source: <https://www.houstonmethodist.org/blog/articles/2020/apr/coronavirus-do-i-need-to-disinfect-my-groceries/>

3. Do we need to sanitise the deliveries and parcels that we receive via courier?

According to the World Health Organisation, the risk of transmission via mail and packages is very low. However, it is wise to practice the same hygiene routine you use for any product or item coming into your home.

- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling the delivered items.
 - Disinfect the surfaces that were used for opening.
 - Once you have removed the contents, dispose of the packaging immediately.
-

Source: WHO

4. What is COVID-19 reinfection?

A reinfection, or repeat infection means a person who was infected or got sick once, recovered, then later became infected again by the same strain.

Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00071-6>

5. Do we need a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose?

A booster dose refers to another dose of vaccine that is administered to someone who has built enough protection after vaccination, but that protection has decreased over time (waning immunity). In general, individuals will be eligible for their booster dose 8 months after they had received their second dose of an mRNA vaccine.

Source: CDC

6. Who should get a booster dose?

Booster doses are beneficial for those whose immunity and clinical protection has fallen below a rate deemed sufficient in that population. Currently, only Cominarty (Pfizer/BioNTech) has been licensed as a booster dose.

7. What are the long-term effects of COVID-19?

Some people continue to experience symptoms after recovery. This may start from 4 weeks and go beyond 12 weeks. Long COVID (as this is known as) may be due to persistent or hyperactive immune responses with inflammation and organ dysfunction.

Symptoms include psychological, neurological, respiratory, dermatological and cardiovascular reactions. If you continue to feel unwell, please seek medical attention.

8. What is Happy Hypoxia?

Hypoxia refers to low oxygen levels in blood. In a healthy person, the normal oxygen saturation in their bloodstream is above 95%. However, COVID-19 patients will show levels less than 70% - a dangerous decline. In serious cases, patients have tremendous difficulty in breathing. In the initial stages of illness, this may not cause breathlessness and the patient appears to be well and "happy". Hence the name, Happy Hypoxia, otherwise known as Silent Hypoxemia.

A person with Happy Hypoxia may experience the following:

- Bluish lips
- Skin colour gets a reddish or purple tone
- Profuse sweating without having to exert oneself

It is recommended that the patient's blood oxygen levels be monitored regularly with a pulse oximeter, even if it is a mild case of COVID-19.

Insurance companies that offer COVID-19 coverage

Most insurance providers offer COVID-19 coverage on a pay-and-claim basis. Please consult your insurance provider on the coverage details such as cash relief, hospitalisation benefits and others.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • AIA | • Lonpac Insurance |
| • AIA Takaful Group | • Manulife Insurance Bhd |
| • Allianz | • MSIG |
| • Allianz Life Insurance | • Prudential Assurance Malaysia Bhd |
| • AXA Affin | • Prudential BSN Takaful |
| • Berjaya Sompo Insurance | • Sun Life Malaysia Takaful |
| • Etiqa Insurance & Takaful | • Tokio Marine Insurance |
| • Great Eastern | • Tune Insurance |
| • Hong Leong Assurance | • Zurich Insurance Bhd |
| • Hong Leong MSIG Takaful | |

**List may differ depending on the hospital you go to*

If you have COVID-19 insurance coverage, here's what you'll need to do:

- Produce your insurance card upon admission/registration.
- A deposit will be collected while pending confirmation from the insurance company.
- Any appeal is to be directed to the insurance company, not the hospital.

Post-COVID-19 care packages

For more information about the packages*, do reach out to the nearest Pantai Hospital listed below.

| Location | Hospital | Package details | For more details & enquiries |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| Johor | Pantai Hospital Batu Pahat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical exam & consultation by Physician • COVID-19 Neutralising Antibody Test • Blood Investigation • Electrocardiogram (ECG) • Chest X-Ray | <p>☎ +607-433 8811</p> <p>📞 +6010-668 8811</p> |
| Kuala Lumpur | Pantai Hospital Cheras | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratory tests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID-19 Neutralising Antibody Test (CNAB) - Full Blood Count - Renal Function Test - Liver Function Test - Lipid Profile - Fasting Glucose - Urine FEME • Chest X-Ray • Electrocardiogram (ECG) • Consultation by Medical Officer | <p>☎ +603-9145 2862</p> <p>📞 +6019-474 9288</p> |

*Packages may differ depending on the hospital you go to

| Location | Hospital | Package details | For more details & enquiries |
|----------|----------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Perak | Pantai Hospital Ipoh | <p>Early Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Consultation • MCC 1** • C-Reactive Protein • Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) Screening <p>Intermediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Consultation • MCC 1** • C-Reactive Protein • Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) Screening • Chest X-Ray • Lung Function Test <p>Cardio Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Consultation • MCC 1** • C-Reactive Protein • Echocardiogram • Exercise Stress Test • ECG • Lung Function Test <hr/> <p><i>**includes Full Blood Count, Diabetes Screening and Renal & Liver Profile etc</i></p> <hr/> <p>Tag on options available</p> | ☎ +605-540 5604 |

*Packages may differ depending on the hospital you go to

| Location | Hospital | Package details | For more details & enquiries |
|----------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Perak | Pantai Hospital Manjung | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation by Medical Officer • Chest X-Ray • Blood tests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full Blood Count - Random/Fasting Blood Glucose - Renal Profile - Liver Function Test - Fasting Lipid Profile - C-Reactive Protein - Urine FEME • Neutralising Antibody Test | ☎ +605-689 8676 |
| Selangor | Pantai Hospital Ampang | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical exam & consultation by Internal Medicine Specialist • COVID-19 Neutralising Antibody Test • Blood Investigation (includes 62 tests) • Electrocardiogram (ECG) • Chest X-Ray | ☎ +603-4289 2919 🕒 +6016-398 2828 |

**Packages may differ depending on the hospital you go to*

| Location | Hospital | Package details | For more details & enquiries |
|----------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Selangor | Pantai Hospital Klang | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratory tests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID-19 Neutralising Antibody Test (CNAB) - Full Blood Count - Renal Function Test - Liver Function Test - Lipid Profile - Fasting Glucose - Urine FEME • Chest X-Ray • Electrocardiogram (ECG) • Consultation by Medical Officer | <p>☎ +603-3258 5500</p> <p>📞 +6016-225 5500</p> |

**Packages may differ depending on the hospital you go to*

COVID-19 glossary

Here's a glossary to demystify some of the terms and words related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Antigen

The word “antigen” is derived from antibody generation.

Any substance that induces the immune system to produce antibodies against it is called an antigen. In general, antigens are composed of proteins, peptides, and polysaccharides. Any portion of bacteria or viruses, such as surface protein, coat, capsule, toxins, and cell wall, can serve as antigens.

Antibodies

Antibodies are Y-shaped disease-fighting proteins that develop in response to an infection, or enter the body passively via a vaccination. They “recognise” infectious invaders such as viruses and bacteria, fungi, and parasites and target them for destruction.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

Asymptomatic

This means that you do not show any symptoms, but you could be infected. If you live in a house with people who have a COVID-19 infection and you have no symptoms, you may be asymptomatic. While people with asymptomatic infection are less likely than those with symptoms to spread the disease, the risk is by no means non-existent. Therefore, self-isolating for the 7 to 10-day period from your last contact with someone with a known infection is so important.

Chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs)

This describes a range of diseases of the airways and other structures of the lung. Some of the most common diseases are chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Asthma, occupational lung diseases and sleep apnoea syndrome. Allergic rhinitis (“hay fever”) also affects the lives of millions worldwide.

Close contact

Closed contacts of confirmed case were those as below:

- Face-to-face contact with a confirmed case within 1 metre and for at least 15 minutes;
- Living in the same household as a COVID-19 patient;
- Working together in close proximity or sharing the same classroom environment with a COVID-19 patient;
- Travelling together with COVID-19 patient in any kind of conveyance;
- Health care associated exposure without appropriate PPE (including providing direct care for COVID-19 patients, working with health care workers infected with COVID-19, visiting patients, or staying in the same close environment of a COVID-19 patient).

Source: https://covid-19.moh.gov.my/garis-panduan/garis-panduan-kkm/ANNEX_12_Management_of_Close_Contacts_of_Confirmed_Case_30082021.pdf

Cluster

A coronavirus cluster occurs when there are two or more laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in a worksite, or if a person who has a positive test result within a 14-day period, is linked to another positive case at the worksite, or is asymptomatic.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/community-mitigation/prioritizing-non-healthcare-assessments.html>

Community transmission

The term basically means when a large community has been infected with the virus and includes those who aren't sure of how or where they became infected to begin with.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

Contact tracing

This is the process of identifying everyone that a COVID-19 patient has come in contact with in the last two weeks.

Comorbidities

The presence of two or more diseases in the same person.

Endemic

Most commonly used to describe a disease that is prevalent in or restricted to a particular location, region, or population.

Epidemic

A disease that affects a large number of people within a community, population, or region.

Incubation

The incubation period is the time it takes for symptoms to appear after a person is infected. According to the WHO, most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days.

Intubation

This is a **procedure** that is used when you are unable to breathe on your own. Your doctor puts a tube down your throat and into your windpipe to make it easier to get air into and out of your lungs. A machine called a ventilator pumps in air with extra oxygen.

mRNA (Messenger Ribonucleic Acid) Vaccine

To trigger an immune response, many vaccines put a weakened or inactivated germ into our bodies. mRNA vaccines, however, use mRNA created in a laboratory to teach our cells how to make a protein - or even just a piece of a protein - that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech are two examples of the mRNA vaccine.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>

Oxygen therapy

Oxygen therapy is prescribed for people who are unable to get enough oxygen on their own. This is often because of lung conditions that prevent the lungs from absorbing oxygen, including:

- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Pneumonia
- Asthma
- bronchopulmonary dysplasia, underdeveloped lungs in newborns
- heart failure
- cystic fibrosis
- sleep apnoea
- lung disease

To determine if a person will benefit from oxygen therapy, doctors test the amount of oxygen in their arterial blood. Another way to check is by using a pulse oximeter that indirectly measures oxygen levels, or saturation, without requiring a blood sample. The pulse oximeter clips onto a person's body part, like a finger. Low levels mean that a person may be a good candidate for supplemental oxygen.

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health/oxygen-therapy#candidates>

Pandemic

An epidemic that is spread across multiple countries and continents.

Social distancing

Any number of measures taken to increase the physical space between people to slow the spread of the virus. They include staying home more often, catching up with loved ones online instead of in person, strictly limiting the number of visitors to your home, and staying away from other people when you are in a public space. The WHO recommends being more than one metre (three feet) away from the nearest person, while some health experts have suggested maintaining a distance of at least two metres from others.

R₀ or R-naught

R₀, pronounced “R naught,” is a mathematical term that indicates how contagious an infectious disease is. It is also referred to as the reproduction number. As an infection is transmitted to new people, it reproduces itself.

R₀ tells you the average number of people who will contract a contagious disease from one person with that disease.

For example, if a disease has an R₀ of 18, a person who has the disease will transmit it to an average of 18 other people.

Vaccines

A preparation that is used to stimulate the body's immune response against diseases. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but some can be administered orally or sprayed into the nose.

Variants

It is normal for viruses to acquire small changes in their genetic code as they are transmitted from person to person. Often these ‘mutations’ have no effect. However, because this genetic code provides the instructions for making the proteins the virus is built out of, occasionally a mutation will alter a protein’s structure in such a way that it affects how the virus behaves, for example, by making it easier for it to latch onto human cells and infect us. Such mutations may give that virus a competitive advantage over related viruses, or ‘variants’, meaning that over time, that new variant becomes the dominant one circulating in a population.

Ventilator

It is a machine that helps you to take breaths if you are unable to do it on your own. Your doctor might call it a “mechanical ventilator.” People also often refer to it as a “breathing machine” or “respirator.” Technically, a respirator is a mask that medical workers wear when they care for someone with a contagious illness. A ventilator is a bedside machine with tubes that connect to your airways.

For more information, please visit

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