



Sepsis and COVID-19

Coronavirus, or COVID-19, became a global pandemic in 2020. Experts suggest that the virus could emerge seasonally for years to come. COVID-19 is extremely contagious, resulting in high rates of infection and mortality. Any type of infection can lead to sepsis—and many people who die from coronavirus in fact die from sepsis. Pneumonia, which frequently leads to sepsis, is a particular risk for those with COVID-19 but viral infections can affect all organs in the body. Early COVID-19 studies have shown high rates of liver and kidney dysfunction, in addition the effects on the respiratory system which are the hallmark of COVID-19 infection. Sepsis survivors can also be at increased risk due to already-compromised immune systems.

Symptoms.

Coronavirus symptoms can range from mild to severe. It is important to know that the incubation period before symptoms appear can last from 2-14 days—and some people infected with the virus will display no symptoms at all. This means that you can transfer the disease to those you come in contact with before, or without, experiencing symptoms yourself.

Here are the most common symptoms:

- Cough
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Symptoms Continued

- Chills (repeated shaking with chills)
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste and smell

The signs of sepsis are:

- Rapid breathing and fast heartbeat
- Pale or mottled skin
- Confusion or sleepiness
- Fever and chills
- Feeling the sickest you've ever felt
- Extreme pain

Causes.

COVID-19 spreads when respiratory droplets released through coughing, sneezing or talking move from an infected person to an uninfected person. This generally occurs when people are standing within six feet of one another. It can also spread if a person touches a surface with the virus on it and then touches his or her mouth, nose or eyes. The virus can survive on surfaces for up to four days.

Risk Factors.

Those most at risk of contracting COVID-19 are:

- Adults over the age of 65
- Older adults living in a nursing homes or assisted care facilities
- Those with underlying medical conditions, including:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions

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- People who are immunocompromised
- People with severe obesity
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

Diagnosis.

Due to the strain on the healthcare system and the shortage of diagnostic tests, it is recommended that those with mild symptoms of COVID-19 remain at home, self-quarantine, and keep in contact with their healthcare provider by phone. Those experiencing difficulty breathing or a severe fever should seek medical care and may be administered a diagnostic test.

Treatment.

If you have mild symptoms, stay at home until you've recovered. You can relieve your symptoms if you:

- Rest and sleep
- Keep warm
- Drink plenty of liquids
- Use a room humidifier or take a hot shower to help ease a sore throat and cough

No drugs or other therapeutics to treat COVID-19 have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Supplemental oxygen and mechanical ventilatory support are used to treat severe symptoms of COVID-19.

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Prevention.

No drugs or therapeutics to prevent COVID-19 have been approved by the FDA. The following recommendations can help prevent the transmission of the virus:

- Clean your hands often by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds
- Avoid close contact with others, especially those who are feeling unwell
- Cover your mouth when you sneeze with a clean tissue on the crook of your arm
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently
- Clean and disinfect items that enter your home, including groceries and packages
- Self-quarantine in your home if you or people you have been in close contact with are unwell
- Wear a mask when outdoorsAvoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

COVID-19 and Children.

COVID-19 and Children.It appears that cases of COVID-19 are much milder in children than in adults. Relatively few children or infants have been hospitalized and those cases have not been severe. Experts agree that the best way to care for your children at this time is to keep up with their vaccinations and to practice good hand hygiene and social distancing measures. This does not mean you should keep your children indoors. Fresh air and exercise are important for healthy development—just avoid highly trafficked places with a lot of “high touch” surfaces, such as playgrounds. You can help your child understand the importance of hand-washing through our book, *Ouch! I Got a Cut!*, designed for early readers and [available on Amazon](#). All proceeds from book sales support the work of the Rory Staunton Foundation.

COVID-19 and Older Adults.

Adults 65 years and older are at increased risk of becoming severely ill if they contract COVID-19. In fact, 8 out of 10 reported deaths from COVID-19 are in this age group. The prevention measures outlined above are particularly crucial for this segment of the population—and it is further advised that older adults stay home if at all possible. A short video from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains what older adults need to know about COVID-19: [View Here](#).

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