COVID-19 Information and Resources for People with Disabilities

Created by Disability Rights Maine.

Always consult your doctor regarding COVID-19 information. This booklet should not be taken as medical advice.

**What is COVID-19?**

* COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus and is caused by a virus called SARS-Cov-2.

**How does it spread?**

* COVID-19 spreads through droplets. When someone coughs, talks, sneezes, or breathes these droplets enter into the air. These droplets can get on your hands, eyes, nose and mouth and can cause you to get sick.

**COVID-19 Symptoms**

* Symptoms can be different for each person. Some may be mild or strong.

Common symptoms for COVID-19 are:

* Fever
* Cough
* Hard time breathing
* Tired
* Muscle or body aches
* Headaches
* Loss of taste or smell
* Runny Nose
* Sore throat
* Diarrhea
* Throwing up

If you feel sick make sure you stay home, take a COVID-19 test and call your doctor.

**How to stay healthy:**

1. Stay home when you are sick. Stay away from people who are sick.
2. Wear a mask in busy places.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water.
4. Cover your cough or sneeze.
5. Get your COVID-19 shots and boosters.

**Handwashing guide:**

1. Wet your hands with clean water then apply soap.
2. Rub your hands together with the soap. Make sure you get the back of your hands, fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands under clean water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

For more information on handwashing visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/personal-hygiene/hands.html>

**What are Vaccines?**

**Vaccines**

* Vaccines give you protection against a disease without getting you sick. The vaccines teach your body how to fight off an infection like COVID-19.

**COVID-19 Booster Vaccines**

* Booster shots “boost” your protection against COVID-19. The COVID-19 boosters give you another dose of the vaccine.
* Booster shots also target variants of the virus. Variants are different forms of the COVID-19 virus that have developed overtime.

For more information talk to your doctor or visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/overview-COVID-19-vaccines.html>

**If you have COVID-19: What to do if you are sick with COVID-19**

* Stay home
* Drink enough water and get enough sleep
* Make sure to talk to your doctor
* Do not travel and do not use public transportation
* Monitor your symptoms
* Call ahead before visiting your doctor
* Wear a mask
* Cover your coughs and sneezes
* Wash your hands a lot
* Avoid sharing personal items
* Clean all surfaces

**Emergency warning signs: If you are experiencing any of these symptoms call 911 or go to the emergency room**

* Trouble breathing
* Pain or pressure in the chest
* New confusion
* Unable to stay aware or wake up
* Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds

**What to expect after your COVID-19 vaccine**

*Your symptoms will vary, some people experience different symptoms.*

Side effects on the arm where you got your shot:

* Redness
* Swelling
* Pain

Side effects throughout the rest of your body

* Tiredness
* Headache
* Muscle Pain
* Chills
* Fever
* Nausea

Your symptoms should go away in a few days. The side effects you feel is your body building protection against COVID-19.

**Treatment options if you have COVID-19**

Antiviral Treatments

* Antiviral treatments target specific parts of the COVID-19 virus to stop it from multiplying in the body which helps prevent severe illness or death from COVID-19.
* Antivirals can come in pill form or you can get the medication through an IV that puts the medicine into your vein.
* You must go to your doctor immediately and get the prescription within 5 days of testing positive.

Monoclonal Antibody Treatment

* Monoclonal antibodies stop the virus from spreading in your body. It blocks the COVID-19 virus from entering your cells, which limits the amount of virus in your body. It helps boost your body’s ability to fight COVID-19.
* Monoclonal antibodies can be given through an IV that puts the medicine into your vein or through a shot.
* You must go to your doctor immediately and get a prescription within 7 days of testing positive.

**You have the right to ask for COVID-19 treatment**

Individuals who are at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 are eligible for certain treatments.

* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that the disability population is at a high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
* If you test positive for COVID-19 call your doctor right away to determine if you are eligible for antiviral or monoclonal antibody treatment.

For more information on high risk populations and COVID-19 treatments, visit the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

**Commonly used words explained**

Quarantine

* Is used when you have been in contact with someone that had COVID-19.

Isolation

* Keeping people who tested positive for COVID-19 away from people who are not sick.

Social distance or Physical distancing

* Putting space between yourself and other people.
* You can do this by avoiding groups of people and keeping 6 feet from other people.

Pandemic

* A disease that has spread to many countries and infecting many people.

Immune system

* A system within your body that works to help you from getting sick from infections like COVID-19.

Immunity

* Your body’s ability to fight off an infection like COVID-19.

Antibodies

* Proteins in your body that fight off a disease.

Asymptomatic

* When you have the infection but do not show symptoms.

**Common COVID-19 Questions**

**Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

* Yes, vaccines are safe. The Food and Drug Administration studied clinical trial data and are constantly monitoring safety of vaccines.

**Why should I get the vaccine if I am probably going to get COVID-19 anyways?**

* The vaccine reduces the chance of you getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from the virus.

**Can I get COVID-19 if I am vaccinated?**

* Yes. There is a chance that you will still get COVID-19, but getting vaccinated reduces the chances of getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from the virus. No vaccine is 100% effective.

**Can I get my COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?**

* Yes, there is no waiting period required between getting your COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines.

**More Common COVID-19 Questions**

**Can I get the COVID-19 Vaccine if I am pregnant or planning to get pregnant?**

* Yes. The vaccine is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or trying to get pregnant.

**Do I need a COVID-19 booster?**

* Yes. COVID-19 vaccines effectiveness wears off over time and new strains of the virus develop. The boosters increase your protection against the disease and target new strains.

**Do the COVID-19 vaccines cost money?**

* The COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone 6 months and older regardless of insurance.

**Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am currently sick with COVID-19?**

* No. You need to wait until you have completed your isolation period. You also need to wait until you have no symptoms of COVID-19.

For more common questions and answers related to COVID-19, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

**Resources for COVID-19**

Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL) offers help with vaccination and testing for people with disabilities:

* Phone number: 888-677-1199
* Website: <https://acl.gov/DIAL>

Vaccine finder offers assistance locating a vaccine near you:

* <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/>

Community-Based Testing Sites for COVID-19:

* <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites/index.html>

Need a ride to your vaccine appointment?

* Phone number: 1-855-608-5172

Find where to get treated:

* <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/treatment/where-to-get-treated>

Free COVID-19 Tests:

* <https://www.accesscovidtests.org/>