

# How do you treat the symptoms of coronavirus?

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Top public health officials have one piece of advice for curbing the outbreak of the new coronavirus: stay home.

Even for some people who test positive for COVID-19 or who are showing symptoms of the virus, the advice is the same: Stay home until you're no longer at risk of spreading it to others.

There is no vaccine or specific treatment for the new disease, which most commonly causes fever, coughing and shortness of breath. But [health experts](#) say there are things you can do to help relieve symptoms.

Here's what you can do if you have the [coronavirus](#):

## **Get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids**

Health experts say most cases of COVID-19—as many as 80% - are mild and will not require [medical attention](#).

Just like when you have a cold or flu, getting plenty of rest and staying hydrated can help your body fight off infection.

## **Take fever-reducing medication**

A person's normal body temperature ranges between 97.5 degrees to 98.9 degrees, while most health-care providers consider a fever to be 100.4 degrees or higher, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine.

A fever is not an illness, but a sign that your body is fighting an infection, which leads some to believe that taking fever-reducing medications might be a bad idea.

The *New York Times* previously reported there's no evidence that taking fever-reducing medications worsen outcomes of disease prevention, so it's generally safe to take them in the case of mild illness.

Most health experts say that adults can switch between doses of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) when they have a fever at 102 degrees or higher. Johns Hopkins cautions to follow label instructions or as provided by your doctor, and to be careful when switching between medication, as errors in doses can cause side effects.

A widely circulated tweet from France's health minister suggested that taking ibuprofen could worsen the effects of COVID-19 and that people with a fever should stick to acetaminophen, like Tylenol.

News outlets in Europe reported that a World Health Organization representative from the organization's Geneva headquarters recommended taking acetaminophens to treat fever but that experts were looking into the claim to give further advice.

But experts have said that more evidence is needed to know for sure and that there's no agreed-upon reason to avoid it to treat fever caused by COVID-19.

"More research is needed to evaluate reports that ibuprofen may affect the course of COVID-19," the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases said in a written statement to the Los Angeles Times. "Currently, there is no evidence that ibuprofen increases the risk of serious complications or of acquiring the virus that causes COVID-19."

The institute also told the outlet that "There is also no conclusive evidence that taking ibuprofen is harmful for other respiratory infections."

Children with a fever above 102 degrees who are older than 6 months can take acetaminophen or ibuprofen, according to the Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic cautions children and adults to avoid taking multiple medications that contain acetaminophen, such as some cough and cold

medicines.

If your fever persists longer than a few days and is not brought down by medication, you should see a doctor. Adults with a fever of 104 degrees or higher should get medical care, MSNBC reported.

## **Take cough syrup, or use cough drops**

The World Health Organization says that while some patients have [nasal congestion](#) and a runny nose when they have COVID-19, a dry cough is one of the most common symptoms.

Doctors recommends cough suppressants for a dry cough because they block your cough reflex and aren't used for coughs with mucus. For nasal congestion, nasal sprays are recommended for a few days, following up with a pill or syrup decongestant if symptoms aren't relieved.

If you're also using fever-reducing medication, be careful not to take multiple types that contain acetaminophen.

## **Try a humidifier or other at-home remedies**

Besides cough drops and syrup, you can also try a home humidifier, drinking hot beverages and soup, or gargling salt water to help ease soreness and inflammation caused by a [cough](#).

If you don't have a humidifier, you can try sitting in your bathroom while running your shower on hot.

## **When to seek medical care**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says you should seek medical care if any of your symptoms worsen.

People who are at higher risk of developing serious illness, or who have serious underlying medical conditions, should seek medical care if they are sick, even if the symptoms are mild, the CDC says.

The CDC says to seek medical care immediately if you experience severe symptoms of COVID-19, which include persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to rouse, or bluish lips or face.

You should also seek [medical care](#) if you still have a fever after several days of taking fever-reducing medications, if your fever increases, or if your [fever](#) is at or above 104 degrees.

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