

PREVENTION: HOW TO AVOID GETTING COVID RIGHT NOW



LONG COVID ESSENTIALS: A SERIES BY The Sick Times × LONG COVID JUSTICE

Avoiding COVID-19 is important. The more times you get COVID-19, the more likely you are to have bad health outcomes, including Long COVID.

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19. **It is airborne, and in the air year-round.** Even during “lows” between surges, there’s still a lot of the virus around. It’s important to keep a consistent prevention routine.

The virus travels in the air like smoke. When you are indoors with poor ventilation, you are at a higher risk of infection: SARS-CoV-2 could be in the air from people who were there before you, even if you are alone or not near anyone else. If no one appears ill, remember that not all cases are symptomatic. Crowded outdoor spaces may also put you in danger of COVID-19.

* CLEAN & FILTERED AIR REDUCES COVID RISKS

To reduce risk of COVID-19 from the air, we can **bring in fresh air (known as *ventilation*)** or **clean the air (known as *filtration*)**:

1. High-quality masks, also called respirators, filter the air. Protect yourself (and others) by **wearing a high-quality mask in indoor public spaces and crowded outdoor spaces** (especially in schools, supermarkets, public transportation, healthcare facilities, pharmacies, and other essential businesses).

- High-quality masks [such as N95s and KN95s](#) are proven to protect people from COVID-19, other airborne viruses, and environmental hazards like pollution and smoke.
- This [video](#) and [document](#) show how to do a “fit test” to find the best respirator for you.
- Surgical masks and cloth masks are significantly less effective than respirators, but are better than no mask.
- Some communities have [groups that distribute free masks](#).

2. Ventilate your home or workplace by **opening windows when possible**, especially if you have roommates or visitors.

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3. You can also filter the air by **using [air purifiers](#)**, including [Corsi-Rosenthal Cubes](#) you can make yourself.

4. When possible, **make plans with friends and family outdoors**, where there is naturally good ventilation.

* **OTHER TOOLS THAT CAN HELP YOU REDUCE RISK:**

- Keep current on [COVID-19 vaccinations](#), which can help reduce the severity of COVID-19. Vaccination may also reduce risk of Long COVID, but does not eliminate it – many vaccinated people have gotten Long COVID.
- Use COVID [tests](#), including rapid antigen tests, [rapid molecular tests](#), or PCR tests, before visiting indoors and unmasking with friends and family.
- In combination with masking, you can use [nasal sprays shown to protect](#) against airborne viruses and gargle with mouthwash that includes [an ingredient called CPC \(Cetylpyridinium Chloride\)](#).

Stay informed about when cases are rising. Knowing when there is a surge can help you strengthen your precautions! We can do so by **tracking [wastewater data](#)**, in which scientists test our sewers to see how much virus is around. Find current information at [The Sick Times](#).

Many of us do not have full control over COVID risk. Join [Long COVID Justice](#) and allied groups to fight for better COVID prevention policies to help us all.

* **RESOURCES**

- Visit [Long COVID Justice's resources page](#) for info on related topics like hosting COVID-safer events, finding local air purifier lending libraries, where to buy masks, etc!

* **FULL SERIES OF FACTSHEETS WITH LINKED RESOURCES + MORE:**

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* **QUESTIONS?** connect@s4hi.org

This series was designed by people living with Long COVID and associated diseases. Each resource sheet has been reviewed by patient and medical experts. This is an informational resource, not medical advice. Publication date: 9/16/2024.