

COVID-19 may impact your agency and the people you serve. Review and share these tips with your program's supervisors, line staff, and volunteers.

Tip #1: As Usual, Monitor Your Clients for Symptoms, and Refer to Care if Necessary

The symptoms of COVID-19 are like symptoms of the flu, a cold, or pneumonia: fever, cough and trouble breathing. These symptoms usually appear between 2 and 14 days after exposure to the virus.

What to do if a client has symptoms?

- Encourage frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizer
- Offer tissues, a plastic bag to dispose of tissues, and hand sanitizer to keep near them to help limit their movement in the facility
- Provide masks for anyone with coughing, sneezing, or runny nose
- Do your best to isolate the person from others
- Encourage drinking fluids, rest or sleep and monitor for worsening symptoms
- Clients with mild symptoms could get worse, so continue monitoring and refer to care if needed

Clients should be referred to a health care provider or clinic if they have these symptoms:

- Fever, *plus any of the following*:
- Rapidly worsening illness
- Complaining of being very sick or unable get around as they normally would
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Severe cough or severe sore throat
- Chest pain

Medical attention is not typically required for clients with mild symptoms:

- Runny nose or nasal stuffiness
- Mild headache
- Body aches
- Mild GI upset (more often seen in children) or poor appetite

Call your local health department immediately if you suspect a client has COVID-19.

If your client is over age 60 or has underlying medical problems like diabetes, heart disease or lung disease, or weakened immune symptom, they may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 and its complications.

Tip #2: Pay Extra Attention to Your Usual Respiratory Illness Prevention Efforts

- Do your best to separate sick people with from healthy people
- For general sleeping areas (for those who are not experiencing respiratory symptoms), ensure that beds/mats are at least 6 feet apart, and request that all clients sleep head-to-toe
- Offer separate spaces for eating and resting
- Post signs to remind people to cover their cough and wash hands
- Encourage clients and staff to wash hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Make sure all restrooms are well stocked with soap and paper towels
- Provide hand sanitizer at key locations in your agency (by entry, phone, computers, elevators)
- Cover your cough with inner elbow, inside of shirt/coat collar or tissues
- Ask clients with symptoms to wear a mask or to cover their cough
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, and mouth
- Staff should stay home if they have fever or respiratory symptoms
- Stock up on supplies of tissues and hand sanitizer
- Have masks on hand for people with symptoms
- Provide plastic-lined wastebaskets in your facility for used tissues and masks
- Keep a supply of gloves for staff to use when picking up used tissues or emptying wastebaskets
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces several times per shift during cold and flu season
- Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, tabletops, handrails, pens, phones, and bathroom fixtures