A Self-Advocate’s Guide To COVID

Adapted from Green Mountain Self-Advocates, “A Self-Advocate’s Guide to COVID-19”

Created by the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council.
What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus. There is more than one kind of COVID. Different types of the same germ are called variants. Some variants of COVID are easier to catch than others.

It is spread through the air by people who have COVID.

People with COVID can look or feel sick, but sometimes they don’t.

How do you get it?

Someone with COVID gives you their germs. When they cough or sneeze, their germs get in the air, on you, and on things. Germs get into your body through your mouth, nose, and your eyes.
How can I lower the risk of getting COVID or other types of sicknesses?

Visit with people outside. Being outside greatly lowers risk of getting COVID.

Don’t stand or sit too close to others when inside. Being 6 feet away or more is safest.

Wear a mask when in group settings that are inside.

The highest risk for COVID are indoor places with lots of unmasked people.

Use air purifiers in indoor settings like your home or office.
Get your COVID vaccines and boosters.

The purpose of vaccination is to lower risk of going to the hospital or dying.

Wash your hands a lot and use hand sanitizer.

Why do I need vaccine shots? What is a booster shot?

An extra shot is called a booster.

Over time, your body needs more of the vaccine to keep fighting off the virus. Lots of other vaccines besides the COVID vaccine have booster shots too. For example, you get a flu booster shot to keep you safe from the flu every year.
Test at a healthcare provider or do a self test at home. You can get a self test at a pharmacy.

Stay away from others until you know if you have COVID or not.

What if I am around someone with COVID?

Keep track of how you feel. If you feel sick, here are a list of symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Tired
- Coughing
- Lose your sense of smell or taste
- Hard time breathing
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- An upset stomach, nausea or diarrhea
- Chills
- Tired
- Lose your sense of smell or taste
- Sore throat
- An upset stomach, nausea or diarrhea
How do I get a test?

Medicaid covers the cost of tests.

Call your doctor. They can help you find a free test.

Call 888-677-1199 Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. This is a COVID Hotline for people with disabilities.

What happens when you get a COVID test?

At a doctor’s office: A nurse or a doctor will ask you some questions about how you feel and if you have any symptoms.

The person doing the test will take a swab, which looks like a long cotton stick, and they will put it in your nose. It might tickle or feel a little weird, but it shouldn’t hurt.

You may have to wait a little while to get the test results. A doctor will call to let you know if you have the virus.

At home: Wash your hands and make sure you have everything that you need to take the test: a test kit, a timer, and a place to throw your used test away after you are done.

The test kit has instructions, a swab, a test, and a tube with liquid. Follow the instructions exactly as they are written.

If the test shows that you might have COVID, call your doctor.
What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19?

Testing positive means you have COVID. You must stay home and isolate yourself. Isolate means to keep away from people you live with. You must do this until you test negative.

Stay in your own room away from others. Do not eat with others. Do not do anything with others.

If you share your home with others and leave your room, always wear a mask. Wear a mask if you leave your room to go to the bathroom. Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
Tell your doctor you have COVID. There is medicine for people who get COVID.

Tell people you have been around that you have Covid. You might feel embarrassed. But, you need to tell them! We all know the virus is very easy to catch. People will not be mad at you.

After 5 days, do a test. If it is negative you can stop isolation.

If the test is positive, continue to test until negative.
What is The Inclusive Healthcare Partnership Project?

The creators of the Inclusive Healthcare Partnership Project (IHPP) believe that everyone should have the tools they need to support their own health. This includes health information that is easy to understand. It also means that healthcare providers are prepared to work with patients with a wide range of disabilities.

IHPP has two goals. First, to create plain language health information designed by and for people with developmental disabilities. Second, to help nurses, doctors, and other providers communicate effectively with neurodiverse patients.

Want to learn more about this health topic? Want to view our sources?

Scan this QR Code or visit: http://www.ihppvt.org

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