

# Interim FAQs for Communities: COVID-19 and CPR Training



## CPR & Emergency Cardiovascular Care

**Q: Can I get COVID-19 from performing CPR?**

**A:** According to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), your risk is variable depending on your location, whether people are wearing masks, and other factors. However, when a cardiac arrest occurs at home (as has been reported in 70% of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests before widespread shelter-at-home ordinances), lay rescuers are likely to have already been exposed to COVID-19.

If someone's heart stops, you should perform at least Hands-Only CPR, if you're willing and able, and especially if you share the same household. If you choose to do so, first call 9-1-1 and then push hard and fast in the center of the person's chest until advanced help arrives. It's also still important to find an AED, if one is available. If you choose to perform breaths, you can also use a barrier device, such as a pocket mask or face shield, to help protect yourself. If you think the person may have COVID-19, please state your concerns to the emergency response telecommunicator so everyone who responds can be aware of the potential for COVID-19 transmission.

**Q: Should I still do the breaths for CPR?**

**A:** Hands-Only CPR has been shown to be as effective as conventional CPR in many cases. If you have completed CPR training, and feel comfortable doing so, you should also give breaths. Overall, compressions with breaths is the most effective CPR in helping to save lives, especially in children/infants, and people whose hearts have stopped due to drug overdose, drowning, and other respiratory issues. But the most important thing is to do what is most comfortable for YOU.

- For a child or an infant, the cause of the heart stopping is likely to be due to a respiratory issue, so breaths are really important. Most children or infants who have their heart stop are provided CPR by a family member or friend. Consider performing compressions and breaths, especially if the child/infant is known to you.
- If you do not feel comfortable giving breaths, or are concerned for COVID-19, you can consider only performing Hands-only CPR until help arrives.

**Q: Can I still use an AED?**

**A:** Yes. Early AED use is still very important. AED pads can be placed on the person's chest as directed by the AED prompts. Use the AED as directed. There are no additional directions needed for coronavirus. Clean the AED surface after use with simple disinfectant to kill the virus, following the manufacturer's guidelines. Protect yourself and others by wearing gloves when cleaning, and then washing your hands with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your face (e.g., eyes, mouth, or nose).

### Mass Training Events

The American Heart Association supports following the existing recommendations for mass gatherings outlined on the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#), and in the U.S. refer to the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) recommendations, as well as the proposals and suggestions of the national, state, and local public health authorities which will have the most up-to-date facts and will provide information on basic protective measures against

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COVID-19. Also, anyone who does not feel comfortable gathering for large events should not attend mass trainings. And, we urge anyone feeling ill to stay home.

**Q: What is a novel coronavirus? And what is COVID-19?**

**A:** A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](#) and cause mild illness, like the common cold. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. (Source: [CDC](#), accessed 10/6/2020)

**Q: How does it spread?**

**A:** The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Some infections can be spread by exposure to virus in small droplets and particles that can linger in the air for minutes to hours. These viruses may be able to infect people who are further than 6 feet away from the person who is infected or after that person has left the space.

People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others. We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes. (Source: [CDC](#))

**Q: Can I catch COVID-19 from surfaces?**

**A:** It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be a common way the virus spreads. (Source: [CDC](#))

**Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

**A:** People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease are more likely to develop serious illness. (Source: [CDC](#))

**Q: How do I know how many people have COVID-19 in my community?**

**A:** The rates of COVID-19 vary by location, however, so it is important to follow the recommendations of the [CDC](#), [WHO](#), local/state/federal government and/or your local public health department on the current rates of COVID-19 in your community.

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**Q: How does the [CDC](#) recommend I protect myself to reduce my risk for getting COVID-19?**

**A:** Please review the following recommendations:

### Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- It's especially important to wash:
  - Before eating or preparing food, before touching your face, after using the restroom, after leaving a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, after handling your mask, after changing a diaper, after caring for someone sick, after touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### Avoid close contact

- Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
  - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
  - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
  - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

### Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- The mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
  - Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.
- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.

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- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. (Source: [CDC](#))