

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Individuals with HIV

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of the disease caused by the novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) in Los Angeles County. Public Health would like to provide you with some general information about COVID-19, as well as specific measures persons with HIV should take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection.

On March 20, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issued an “Interim Guidance on COVID-19 and Persons with HIV,” which highlights the following:

- The limited data that is currently available does not indicate that COVID-19 in persons with HIV differs from that in persons without HIV. Before effective antiretroviral therapy (ART), advanced HIV infection (i.e., CD4 cell count <200/mm³) was a risk factor for complications of other respiratory infections. Whether this is also true for COVID-19 is not yet known.
- Some people with HIV have other comorbidities (e.g., cardiovascular disease or lung disease) that increase the risk of having more serious outcomes with COVID-19 illness. Chronic smokers are also at risk of more severe disease.
- **Therefore, until we know more, it is important that all persons with HIV, especially those with advanced HIV or poorly controlled HIV, take steps to help protect themselves from COVID-19.**
- Every effort should be made to help persons with HIV maintain an adequate supply of ART and all other necessary medications.
- Influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations should be kept up to date.
- Maintain on-hand at least a 30-day supply—and ideally a 90-day supply—of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs and other medications.
- Talk to pharmacists and/or healthcare providers about changing to mail-order delivery of medications when possible.
- Talk to health care providers about the risks and benefits of delaying visits or having an in-person versus remote (e.g. telehealth) visit. Factors to consider include the extent of local COVID-19 transmission, the health needs that will be addressed during the appointment, and the person’s HIV status (e.g., CD4 cell count, HIV viral load) and overall health.
- Telephone or virtual visits for routine or non-urgent care and adherence counseling may replace face-to-face encounters.
- For persons who have a suppressed HIV viral load and are in stable health, routine medical and laboratory visits should be postponed to the extent possible.

Refer to the full [DHHS guidance](#), which is comprehensive and includes information for persons with HIV who have fever or respiratory symptoms and are seeking care.

Public Health recommends that individuals at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 take the following actions to reduce their risk of getting sick with the disease:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Take everyday preventive actions:

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- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or using the restroom.
 - If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, and handrails
 - Wash your hands after touching surfaces in public places.
 - Avoid touching objects or surfaces, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands
 - Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks & cell phones)
 - Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Your risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are people in the crowd who are sick.
 - Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel
 - Continue to take your regularly prescribed medication.
 - Make sure you're up to date with your influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations.
- **Since we are currently experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak in LA County, we recommend you stay home** as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed and practice significant social distancing when you are out of your home and at work (remaining 6 ft. apart from others as much as possible).
 - **Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications** to have on hand in case you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.

For Persons with HIV Receiving Assistance through the Ryan White or AIDS Drug Assistance Program

In order to ensure you have access to your medication, the California Department of Public Health has implemented the following, as of March 13, 2020:

- Temporary removal of the restriction for a maximum 30-day supply for uninsured clients;
- Temporary removal of refill restrictions; and
- Eligibility extensions for clients whose eligibility would expire between March - June of 2020.

Similarly, for any person in Los Angeles County receiving Ryan White services, your service eligibility has been extended until June 30, 2020.

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Resources:

United States Department of Health and Human Services “Interim Guidance on COVID-19 and Persons with HIV.” <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/8/covid-19-and-persons-with-hiv--interim-guidance-/0>

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health: Check our website for the accurate information and resources (including guidance documents for particular settings (e.g., schools, clinics, venues), FAQs, and tips for coping): <http://ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/#>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “COVID-19: What People with HIV Should Know”
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/hiv.html>

California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS “COVID-19 Update.”
https://cdph.magellanrx.com/external/commercial/cdph/doc/en-us/CDPH_emergencyaalert_20200316_coronavirus.pdf

California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS “COVID-19 Update: ADAP Network Pharmacies with Mail Order or Delivery Services.” https://cdph.magellanrx.com/external/commercial/cdph/doc/en-us/CDPH_network_pharmacies_mailorder_delivery.pdf

