

CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance for Communities, Schools, Earlier Learning Centers, and the General Public

This guidance provides practical recommendations and information to help people lower risk from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and RSV. Utilize links within the guidance for more knowledge and tools or visit the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/respiratory-virus-guidance.html>

Preventing Respiratory Viruses

- [Immunizations for Respiratory Viruses](#)
- [Hygiene and Respiratory Virus Prevention](#)
- [Taking Steps for Cleaner Air for Respiratory Virus Prevention](#)
- [Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick](#)
- [Masks and Respiratory Virus Prevention](#)
- [Physical Distancing and Respiratory Viruses](#)
- [Testing and Respiratory Viruses](#)

The CDC recommends that all people use core prevention strategies. These are important steps you can take to protect yourself and others:

- Stay up to date with [immunizations](#)
- Practice good [hygiene](#) (practices that improve cleanliness)
- Take [steps for cleaner air](#)
- When you may have a respiratory virus:
 - Use [precautions to prevent spread](#)
 - Seek health care promptly for testing and/or treatment if you have [risk factors for severe illness](#); [treatment](#) may help lower your risk of severe illness

Additional prevention strategies you can choose to further protect yourself and others include:

- [Masks](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- [Tests](#)

Key times for prevention

All of the prevention strategies described in this guidance can be helpful to reduce risk. They are especially helpful when:

- Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of [illness in your community](#).
- You or the people around you were recently exposed to a respiratory virus, are sick, or are recovering.
- You or the people around you have [risk factors for severe illness](#).
 - [Many factors](#) can make it more likely for someone to become very sick from a respiratory virus. In addition to this guidance, there are several specific considerations for people with certain [risk factors for severe illness](#) ([young children](#), [older adults](#), people with [weakened immune systems](#), people who are [pregnant](#), and people with [disabilities](#)).

- You may not be aware of the things that can make others more vulnerable to serious illness. Using the core prevention strategies will provide a degree of protection regardless. If you are unsure about the health condition or risk status of those around you, the most protective option is choosing to use additional prevention strategies, like masking, physical distancing, and testing.

Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick

When you may have a respiratory virus...

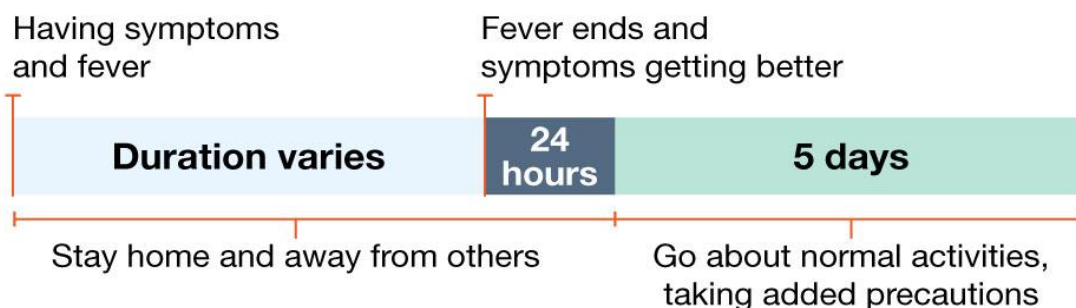
Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause. These symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others.*

- You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:
 - Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
 - You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- When you go back to your normal activities, take added precaution over the next 5 days, such as taking additional [steps for cleaner air](#), [hygiene](#), [masks](#), [physical distancing](#), and/or [testing when you](#) will be around other people indoors.
 - Keep in mind that you may still be able to spread the virus that made you sick, even if you are feeling better. You are likely to be less contagious at this time, depending on factors like how long you were sick or how sick you were.
 - If you develop a fever or you start to feel worse after you have gone back to normal activities, stay home and away from others again until, for at least 24 hours, both are true: your symptoms are improving overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication). Then take added precaution for the next 5 days.

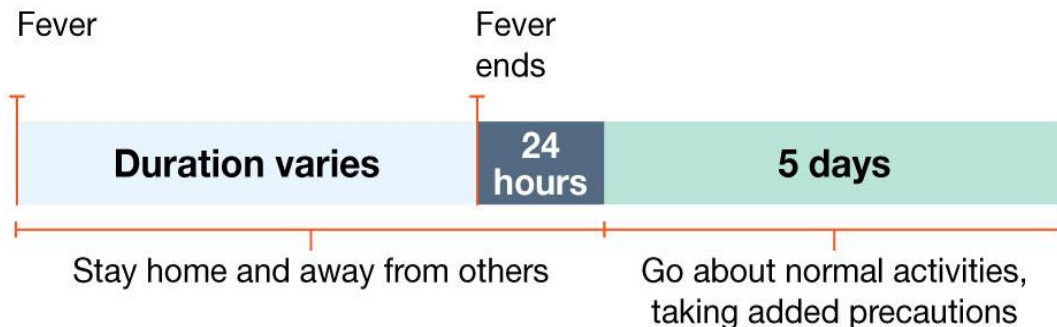
Examples

For illustrative purposes, not to scale

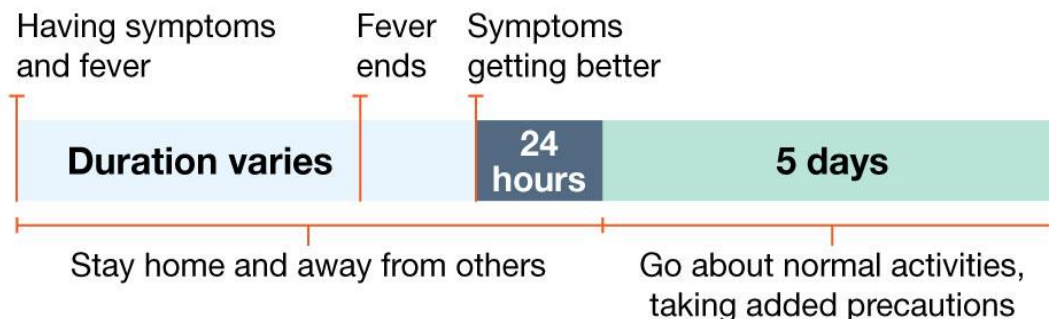
Example 1: Person with fever and symptoms.



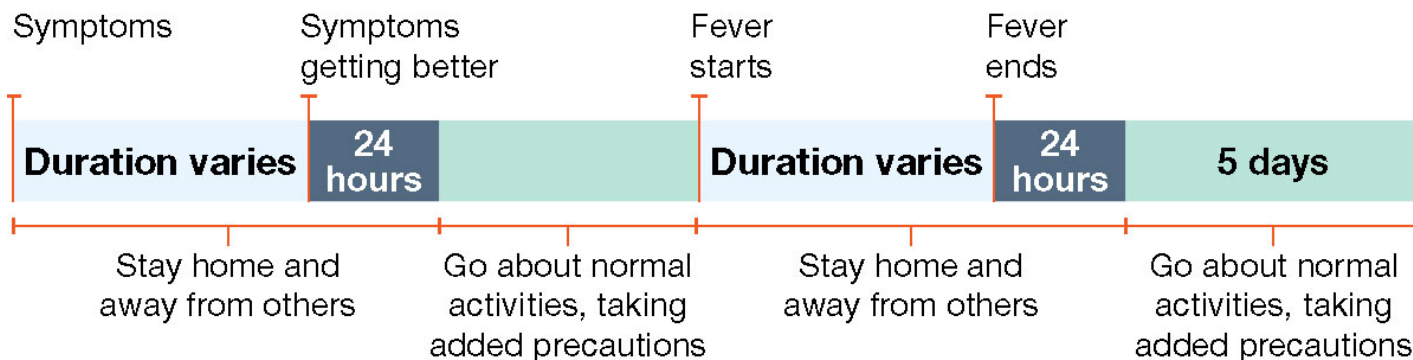
Example 2: Person with fever but no other symptoms.



Example 3: Person with fever and other symptoms, fever ends but other symptoms take longer to improve.



Example 4: Person gets better and then gets a fever.



If you never had symptoms but tested positive for a respiratory virus, you may be contagious. For the next 5 days: take added precaution, such as taking additional [steps for cleaner air](#), [hygiene](#), [masks](#), [physical distancing](#), and/or [testing](#) when you will be around other people indoors. This is especially important to protect people with factors that increase their risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses.

Steps you can take

Individuals can

- Consider using additional prevention tools, such as taking [steps for cleaner air](#), being diligent about [hygiene](#), and using [masks](#) when you're home sick to protect others in your home. This can be especially helpful if you do not have space at home to stay entirely away from others.
- Monitor your symptoms. If you have an emergency warning sign (like trouble breathing or chest pain), seek emergency medical care immediately.

Organizations can

- Advise people to stay home if they are sick.
- Provide employees with paid time off and develop flexible leave and telework policies to support workers to stay home if sick or to care for sick family members.
- Adopt flexible cancellation or refund policies for customers who are sick.

*Symptoms may include but are not limited to chest discomfort, chills, cough, decrease in appetite, diarrhea, fatigue (tiredness), fever or feeling feverish, headache, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, vomiting, weakness, wheezing.

Note

CDC offers separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings ([COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [general infection prevention and control](#)). [Federal civil rights laws](#) may require reasonable modifications or reasonable accommodations in various circumstances. Nothing in this guidance is intended to detract from or supersede those laws.

For questions, please call the Ashtabula County Health Department at 440-576-6010, option 2; Conneaut City Health Department at 440-593-3087; or the Ashtabula City Health Department at 440-992-7123.

