

A guide for caregivers

COVID-19 is challenging to explain, live through, and communicate about. As a caregiver, you work hard to help the person you care for stay healthy and safe during this difficult time. These materials were created to help you share important information about COVID-19 — and make the tough moments a little easier.

We've created videos, posters, social stories, and cut-out activities so you can choose the materials that work best for your situation. The materials cover 5 basic topics:

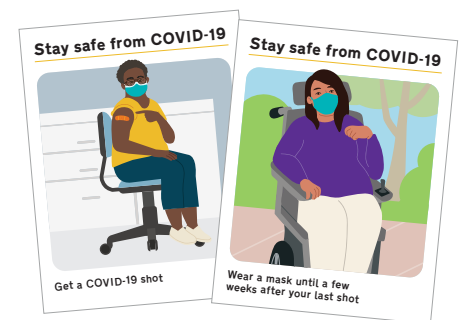
- Getting a COVID-19 shot
- Wearing a mask until a few weeks after your last COVID-19 shot
- Keeping a safe distance until a few weeks after your last COVID-19 shot
- Washing your hands
- Getting a COVID-19 test

Videos

You can watch the videos together to visualize specific ways to stay safe — like wearing a mask and social distancing until a few weeks after your last COVID-19 shot — and apply these ideas to your own daily routine.

Posters

The posters can help the person you care for remember to practice healthy habits. Post them in the kitchen, living room, or other places where you spend time together. You can also share them in schools, workplaces, and other group settings.



Social stories

You can read the social stories together to reinforce habits like wearing a mask and learn what to expect in new situations, like getting a COVID-19 test or vaccine. Some of the social stories are interactive, so you can fill in the blanks together and personalize the story. For example, you could use the “How I keep a safe distance” social story to remind the person you care for to practice social distancing at their workplace or school.

Cut-out activities

These activities are a great way to review the steps of handwashing or get ready for a COVID-19 test. Cut out the pictures together and help the person you care for place the steps in order.



Tips for talking about COVID-19

Talking about COVID-19 can be hard — but it's important to make sure the person you care for understands how to stay safe. Below are some tips that other caregivers have found helpful in having those important conversations.

Model and explain what you're doing to stay safe.

When you take steps like wearing a mask or washing your hands, try pointing out and talking about what you're doing. For example, as you're putting your mask on, say "I'm putting my mask on now before I go outside."



Show empathy by acknowledging the hard things.

Some ways to prevent COVID-19, like wearing a mask and getting a vaccine, can be hard — especially for people with sensory challenges.

Show that you understand what they're going through. Then, remind them that everyone needs to take steps to stay safe from COVID-19. When possible, see if there are small changes that could make it easier — for example, trying out a few different styles of masks.



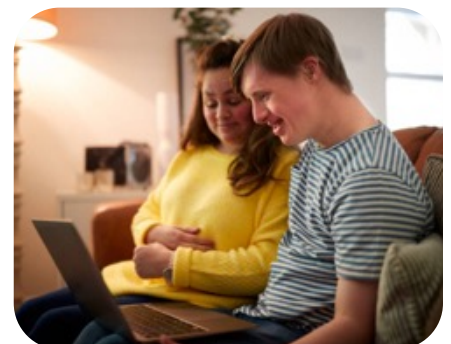
Give safe distance reminders.

When you're getting ready to leave home, remind the person you care for to keep a safe distance (until a few weeks after their last COVID-19 shot). Be sure to use the same words every time. For example, you could say, "When we go out, keep a safe distance between yourself and other people."



Identify and acknowledge changes in routine.

When COVID-19 interrupts your plans or routines, clearly acknowledge what's changing and explain why. For example: "We can't go out to dinner with Uncle Marcus right now. I know you miss hanging out with him, but it's not safe because of COVID-19." If possible, suggest a safer alternative like a video call.



Explain what to expect ahead of time.

When you're getting ready to go to a new place, explain what to expect and point out anything that might be different than usual because of COVID-19.

For example, as you're getting ready for a doctor's appointment, you could mention that everyone will keep a safe distance in the waiting room, and the doctor will also wear a mask. Social stories can be a great way to prepare for new situations like these.



Ease their worries.

It's normal to feel scared or anxious about COVID-19 — especially when there's so much that is out of our control. If the person you care for is feeling worried, remind them that there are things they can do to stay safe: get a COVID-19 shot, wear a mask and keep a safe distance until 2 weeks after their last shot, and wash their hands.



Helpful resources

- Get the latest information about COVID-19 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/).
- Learn ways to cope with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html).
- If you're a professional caregiver, CDC has more tips to help you stay safe from COVID-19: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/direct-service-providers.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/direct-service-providers.html).