

# COVID-19 (coronavirus) FAQs

## Information for those using PrEP or living with HIV



### Am I at greater risk for COVID-19?

People using PrEP or living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA) who have the virus under control (i.e., normal CD4 cell count and undetectable viral load), do not appear to be at a greater risk of becoming ill with COVID-19 compared to the general public.

However, PLWHA who are at greater risk include:

- Nearly half of the people in the United States diagnosed with HIV who are over 50 years old.
- People with underlying health conditions (e.g., cardiovascular and chronic lung disease)
- People with a low CD4 count or not on HIV treatment (antiretroviral therapy)

### How can I protect myself?

You can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by taking these actions:



**Avoid close contact** with people, especially those who are sick with cold/flu symptoms.



**Avoid touching your face** – your eyes, nose, and mouth – with unwashed hands.



**Wash your hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.



**Clean and disinfect** frequently touched objects and surfaces.

### What else can I do to stay healthy?



**Continue your treatment and follow the advice of your health care provider.**



**Make sure you have at least a 30-day supply of your medications and the medical supplies you need to manage your health.**



**Eat a balanced diet, get at least 8 hours of sleep, stay active, and do anything else you may need to take care of yourself.**



**Stay at home when possible or maintain social distancing when going out to take care of your essential needs, which includes shopping for food, getting medicine, and enjoying outdoor activities.**



**Talk to your family and friends remotely, such as online, by phone, or by video chat. This can help you stay socially connected and mentally healthy.**

### Are medications for PrEP or HIV treatment running out?

As of now, there is no shortage or other anticipated problems with medications for HIV prevention or care. To ensure you have the adequate supply of medication, ADAP and PrEP-AP will allow early medication refills and increase the quantity limit to dispense. Consult with your medical provider if you have any questions about your medication before you stop or change your treatment.

## What should I do if I think I am sick?



If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms or believe you've been exposed, call your medical provider ahead of time before going in for a visit.



If your symptoms aren't serious, your medical provider may recommend to follow the same care you would for the common cold: stay home, keep away from others, and take over the counter remedies.



Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash immediately and wash your hands afterwards.



Wear a face mask to stop the spread of droplets that can transmit the virus to others.



Make sure you stay in touch by phone or email with people who can help you.



## What about paying for screening and testing for COVID-19?

- AltaMed and health plans under Covered CA and Medi-Cal are waving co-pays for medically necessary screening and testing for COVID-19, including for those who are undocumented.
- A new USCIS guideline indicates that COVID-19 treatment or preventive services will not negatively affect any undocumented person as part of a future Public Charge review.



## We are currently offering telephone visits for medical and case management appointments.

If you have any questions about HIV prevention or care, please call our Patient Service Center at:

**(323) 869-5448**  
(Los Angeles County)

**(714) 500-0491**  
(Orange County)

For more information about COVID-19, visit:

**[AltaMed.org/coronavirus](https://www.altamed.org/coronavirus)**