

Physical Distancing and Respiratory Viruses

What to know

Physical distancing is an additional prevention strategy that you can choose to further protect yourself and others.

An additional prevention strategy to further protect yourself and others

Putting physical distance between yourself and others can help lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus. There is no single number that defines a "safe" distance, since spread of viruses can depend on many factors.

How it works

Generally, infectious droplets and particles build up closer to the person who is releasing them. The closer you are to someone who has a respiratory virus, the more likely you are to catch it.

Steps you can take

Individuals can

- Avoid being near someone who has respiratory virus symptoms.
- Avoid crowded areas where you may be unable to maintain physical distance.

Organizations can

- Provide employees with paid time off and flexible telework policies to support workers to stay home if sick.

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](#).