



With widespread person to person community transmission of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in the New York metropolitan area, we want to advise and reinforce on **social distancing to protect from the virus**. This Advisory is provided so essential support personnel can take crucial measures to keep the virus from spreading further.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Individuals need to stand at least 6 feet (approximately 2 meters) apart to limit virus spread.

Why is social distancing important?

Research indicates that respiratory droplets from an individual do not travel farther than 6 feet. By staying at least six feet away from other people, you will decrease your chances of catching or spreading COVID-19. Social distancing is important to consider in the workplace, at home, and in your neighborhood.

How can I best protect myself while at work?

- Social distancing - maintain at least 6 feet of separation from others - when possible. This is the safe distance for conversations and any interaction.
 - When time clocking in or out, in the locker or break room, participating in small huddles - maintain 6 feet from your coworker in front and behind.
 - Shift an in-person meeting to a phone or conference call.
- Practice essential prevention hygiene: frequent handwashing, cough/sneeze into your elbow or a tissue (throw away); frequently sanitize high-touch surfaces including touchscreens; avoid touching your face with unwashed hands; wave/elbow bump instead of shaking hands; do not share food or drink.
- Stay home if you are sick.

How to protect myself at home and if I need to move about the neighborhood?

- Keep activities limited to your immediate family.
- Postpone social gatherings or even "drop by" visits.
- Avoid crowded places. Do not enter crowded grocery stores, wait outside for others to leave before entering. Maintain at least 6 feet on either side of the check-out line.
- If an elevator is crowded, wait for the next one or take the stairs if you are able.
- In general, even if you are not feeling sick, stay home when not working as much as possible and practice social distancing.

If you have symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat), stay home, contact your supervisor and be guided accordingly. If symptoms are mild, you do not need to seek medical care. If you are a member of a higher risk group or your symptoms are severe, such as difficulty breathing, contact/call your primary care provider (PCP). Many providers have a virtual care platform, telehealth or telemedicine, so that a patient can meet with a provider by video or telephone. Avoid contact with others, and if sick and you need to leave your home, put on a face mask. In about 80% of cases, symptoms resolve by themselves with supportive care (including rest, fluids, and taking fever reducing medications such as Tylenol).

Additional information available at <https://preparedness.columbia.edu/>.