

# How to Help Those at The Highest Risk



TIPSHEET



Evidence suggests that older adults and people with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of both contracting SARS-CoV-2 and being negatively impacted by it. This population is most susceptible to succumbing to the debilitating effects of this virus.

## Who in your population is at higher risk?



Older adults, ages 65 years and up



People with weakened immune systems



People on medications that suppress the immune systems

People with a serious chronic medical condition (the risk increases with multiple conditions)



Heart disease



Diabetes



Lung disease



Cancer



Hypertension



Depression and anxiety



Social  
Distancing

While the entire population has been encouraged to practice social distancing to help control the spread of the virus and to help those most vulnerable - in the absence of a vaccine that can prevent COVID-19 - more needs to be done to minimize the risk.

# How Can You Help Your At-risk Population?

## Encourage them to take everyday precautions



Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing nose, coughing or sneezing, and having been in a public place.



Avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places. Use gloves, tissues, sleeve or anything handy to cover hands and fingers.



Avoid non-essential travel.



Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available



Don't share food, towels, tools etc.



Stay home as much as possible.



Avoid contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness



Clean and disinfect homes to remove germs including commonly touched surfaces like cell phones, laptops, doorknobs, light switches.



Avoid touching their face



Avoid crowds and limit close contact with others. Stay 6 feet away from other people as often as possible.





## Encourage them to maintain healthy habits

- Stay up to date on vaccinations.
- Healthy habits, like staying active, eating well, getting enough sleep and reducing stress levels can help to keep the immune system strong.
- People with diabetes should exercise strict control over blood sugar levels to maintain strong immune function.
- Take medications as prescribed.

## Encourage them to be prepared

- **Ensure supply of medications.** Contact healthcare provider to check if it is possible to get an advance supply of medications. Consider using mail-order or delivery instead of going to the pharmacy.
- **Have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies to treat fever and other symptoms.** Please contact healthcare provider for guidance on what to take.
- **Maintain stock of household items and groceries including non-perishables.** Consider using online ordering and delivery or relying on family, social networks or community to do shopping. Several stores also offer exclusive hours for at-risk populations.



Ask them to watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs

Symptoms may include (this list is not inclusive):

Fever  
Shortness of breath  
Cough

Emergency warning signs in adults include:

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath,  
Persistent pain or pressure in the chest  
New confusion or inability to arouse  
Bluish lips or face

Get medical attention immediately if these emergency warning signs develop. Surveyed reported that their employees participate in their wellbeing program every day.

## Ensure their family and caregivers are also prepared

- Follow the same everyday precautions; including avoiding possible exposure yourself, regardless if your own risk is low
- Regularly check on them via phone, email and social media
- Know the medications they are taking
- Monitor their food and other medical supplies
- Offer to pick up groceries, supplies and prescriptions



Source: CDC, American College of Cardiology, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists

Ready to take your employee wellbeing program to the next level? [Talk to an expert at Virgin Pulse to get started.](#)

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