

Tips for Managing COVID-19 at Home for Adults



The Coronavirus pandemic has led to an unprecedented public health emergency in India making it difficult for most people to access the healthcare system. The infographic on this page provides concise practical advice for the management of COVID-19 in adults at home (current as of April 25, 2021). The following narrative expands on the principles in the infographic

1. Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, sore throat, dry cough, headache, body aches and loss of smell or taste. If you have these symptoms

- Try to get tested for COVID-19 and stay at home
- Given the high number of cases in India, if you have **one or more** of these symptoms, and live in a highly affected state, you very likely have COVID-19.
- While waiting for your coronavirus test results **OR** if you are not able to get tested
 - Stay home
 - Wear a mask that fits snugly against the side of your face and that completely covers your nose and mouth. Have all household members wear a mask to prevent spread of infection.
 - Keep windows in the house open for ventilation.
 - Drink plenty of fluids (not just water, but fluids with salt and sugar)
 - Take Paracetamol (also called Crocin, Calpol, Metacin, Paracin etc) to reduce fever, headache, and body pain as needed. You can take these medicines up to 4 times per day.
 - Get a pulse oximeter (from a pharmacy or via online stores) and check oxygen saturation levels 3-4 times/day or more often if you feel you are having difficulty breathing.

2. If you test positive for COVID-19 or are waiting for test results **AND** oxygen saturation levels are 92% or higher

- **Do not panic.** Most people with COVID-19 will recover completely.
- You do **NOT** need to go to a hospital.
- Continue to monitor oxygen level 3-4 times/day or more often if you are having difficulty breathing.
- Drink fluids
- Lie on your stomach or side, especially if you have difficulty breathing. This can help to improve oxygen levels.
- You can continue to take Paracetamol as needed.
- Steroid pills are not helpful at this stage and may be harmful

- Other medications like Remdesivir and Tocilizumab are not helpful at this stage
 - You do not need a chest Xray or CT scan
 - If you are over the age of 50, [steroid inhalers \(budesonide\) may be useful](#)
 - Use two puffs of steroid inhaler (budesonide) twice a day for 5-7 days if you have it available; if the puff inhaler version is unavailable, you can also buy dry powder inhalers.
3. If you test positive for COVID-19 or are waiting for test results **AND** oxygen saturation levels are less than 92%
- Consult with a doctor and get admitted to a hospital if this is what they recommend
 - The following are scientifically proven, effective interventions and should be done under medical supervision:
 - Use the minimum amount of oxygen needed to keep your oxygen saturation above 92%.
 - Take a steroid medication. Any of the options listed below can be used. Oral forms are preferred if you are at home, intravenous forms may be used in the hospital
 - Dexamethasone 6 mg once a day
 - Methylprednisolone 32 mg once a day
 - Prednisolone or Prednisone 40 mg once a day
 - Hydrocortisone 50 mg three times a day
 - Steroids are usually given for 5 – 10 days and can be stopped once oxygen is no longer needed. There is no need to taper them down.
 - If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar while on steroids and if they are higher than normal make sure to let your doctor know
 - Lie flat on your stomach or on your side alternating with lying on your back to help improve oxygen levels.
 - Stay in touch with a doctor and seek help if your oxygen needs increase to more than 4L/minute
 - For severely ill patients, hospitals might use drugs such as Remdesivir or Tocilizumab (these are not to be used at home and not to be used without expert supervision)
4. The following medicines are not proven and not routinely advised for the treatment of COVID-19:
- Azithromycin
 - Baricitinib
 - Bevacizumab
 - Convalescent Plasma
 - Doxycycline
 - Favipiravir
 - Fluvoxamine
 - Hydroxychloroquine

- Itolizumab
- Interferon alpha-2b
- Ivermectin
- Lopinavir-Ritonavir
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin D

These tips are based on the following widely accepted international guidelines:

1. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-clinical-2021-1>
2. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-therapeutics-2021.1>
3. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance-publications>
4. <https://www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/covid-19-guideline-treatment-and-management/>
5. <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/whats-new/>

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