Currently, the impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV is not fully understood. However, information and data on COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. While someone who is managing their HIV with medication and who has a normal CD4 count may not be at increased risk for illness, many people who are living with HIV also have conditions that put them at increased risk, including:

- Older age: over 50% of people living with HIV in California are over 50 years old
- Chronic medical conditions, such as: cardiovascular issues or chronic lung disease
- Immune suppression: indicated by a low CD4 count or noncompliance with antiretroviral treatment

**What can someone living with HIV do to protect themselves from COVID-19?**

There is currently no vaccine available to protect against COVID-19. Therefore, the most effective way to protect yourself is to avoid exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. Steps that people with HIV can take to avoid exposure include:

- Following general preventative practices: wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your face or mouth, stay at least 6 feet away from others, and avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Continue to take your HIV medication as prescribed -- this is one of the best ways to take care of your immune system -- and make sure you have an adequate supply (usually at least 30 days) of your antiretrovirals and other medications.
- Avoid crowds and large gatherings, and stay home as much as possible -- especially if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community.

**What are some other ways you can care for yourself during this time?**

As of March 18th, Monterey County is under an indefinite shelter-in-place ordinance to protect the safety of our most vulnerable county residents. However, social distancing can often take a toll on our physical and mental/emotional health. The following tips can help combat the "shelter-in-place blues":

- Create a routine or schedule to follow -- even just planing to eat lunch at the same time every day can help maintain a sense of normalcy.
- Stay connected with friends and/or family remotely, through text, phone call, or video chat.
- Try your best to get eight hours of sleep a night.
- Drink plenty of water and eat nourishing foods.
- Spend time outdoors -- while ensuring you practice social distancing.
- Find a way to move your body every day -- a simple walk can release feel-good endorphins, and there are plenty of free yoga and other exercise classes online.
**COVID-19: Guidance for People Living with HIV**

**Pharmacy Delivery Services in Monterey County**

If you are worried about leaving your house and picking up your prescription(s) in person, many pharmacies -- both nationally and locally -- offer mail-order, delivery, and/or other social-distancing services like curbside pick up or drive-thru options to accommodate concerns over the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. **National chains such as CVS, Safeway, Walgreens, and Walmart are offering delivery and mail-order services at most or all of their locations.** Local pharmacies offering services include:

- **Allcare Pharmacy - Salinas**
  - Services: delivery
  - phone: (831) 424-8053

- **Central Ave. Pharmacy - Pacific Grove**
  - Services: delivery; curbside pick-up
  - phone: (831) 373-1225

- **Sherman’s Apothecary Pharmacy - Salinas**
  - Services: delivery
  - phone: (831) 422-5988

- **Gonzales Rx Pharmacy - Gonzales**
  - Services: delivery for elderly; curbside pick-up
  - phone: (831) 675-3643

In addition to the above list, the California Department of Public Health and the Office of AIDS has released a list of ADAP network pharmacies that offer mail-order and/or delivery services across the state. This list can be found [here](#).

**Changes to HIV Care Protocol at Local HIV Care Clinics**

NIDO Clinic, OPIS, and ASN have all instituted changes to their normal patient and client protocols in response to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, in order to best protect their patients and their families. Notable changes are below:

- **NIDO Clinic** is now performing all morning appointments as **telephone encounters**. Patients with afternoon appointments are also welcome to request a telephone encounter if the prefer. For those patients who prefer an in-person appointment, a **greeter questionnaire** is used to screen all patients and their companions to determine their HIV status and whether or not they are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19.

- **OPIS Clinic** is also utilizing **video and telephone encounters** as much as possible to limit in-person contact in the clinic. However, they will still schedule in-person appointments as needed and also for patients who request them. Montage Medical Group has a **clinic dedicated to persons who exhibit respiratory symptoms** in order to limit their contact with others.

- **Access Support Network** has indefinitely closed their **office to in-person services**, and all business with clients is done virtually -- over the phone, over email, or through fax. Their syringe exchange is still open with limited hours.

**Additional Resources**

To receive updates regarding COVID-19 in Monterey County, text **MCCOVID19** to **888777**

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-NCoV Or COVID-19) ([Monterey County Health Department](#))

COVID-19 Information for those living with HIV ([CDPH and QA](#))

COVID-19: What people with HIV should know ([CDC](#))

Interim Guidance for COVID-19 and Persons with HIV ([DHHS](#))

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information ([CA LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network](#))