Vulnerable American Indian and Alaska Native Populations

Increased Risk for Severe Illness

- Some people are more likely than others to become severely ill.
- Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may need: hospitalization, intensive care, a ventilator to help them breathe, or they may even die.
- People at increased risk, and those who live or visit with them, need to take precautions to protect themselves from getting COVID-19.

Are You at an Increased Risk for Severe Illness?

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have a higher prevalence of the following conditions that can put you at risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Those conditions include:

- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Severely Obese
- Renal (kidney) failure
- Liver disease
- HIV
Based on what we know right now, those at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- Older adults (ages 65+)

People of any age with the following:
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher but less than 40
- Severe Obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Smoking
- Type 2 diabetes

Tips for Keeping Yourself and Others Safe

- Limit contact with other people as much as possible
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds
- Practice physical distancing and avoid close contact (6 feet, or 2 arms lengths) with others outside of your household
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- Avoid all unnecessary travel
- Get your COVID-19 vaccine if you are able and have yet to get it
  - The FDA is now recommending a booster for the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccines
  - Boosters are recommended for those ages 12 or older, if you received your second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine at least five months ago
  - or if you completed your primary dose of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months ago
- Wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- Cover coughs and sneezes, and ask those around you to do the same
- Monitor your health daily
  - Be alert for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms
- If you are feeling sick separate yourself from others whenever possible, follow care instructions from your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider, and get tested for COVID-19

You should always check with your doctor or Tribal healthcare provider to determine if you fall into the high risk category or if you have any other COVID-19 questions.