

Effective, March 16th, 2020, the rental office for University Manor and The Pines will be closed for showings and lobby access. General maintenance repairs will be postponed temporarily. Emergency maintenance will be available whenever possible.

As an apartment dweller, with common spaces, mailbox clusters, lobbies, and a plethora of door handles, keeping safe and practicing prevention habits can be a bit more difficult. From your own personal hygiene to how to manage your apartment to what to expect from your landlord, here are all the tips, suggestions and instructions straight from the CDC just for renters and apartment tenants.

Coronavirus in Your Apartment Community: How To Stay Safe

1. Wash your hands often

Wash your hands after you touch another person or a common surface. Wash your hands before and after you touch or prepare food. Wash your hands after using the restroom. Wash your hands after you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Wash your hands when you get home from being out.

Wash by covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. When you wash, rub with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Experts have recommended singing "Happy Birthday" twice.

If soap and water are not available, disinfect your hands by utilizing a 60 to 95 percent alcohol hand sanitizer and following the listed instructions.

2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick

This seems obvious. But since you never know who is sick, minimize contact in general, as well. Spread out on the bus or subway or in line. Touch elbows instead of shaking hands or fist-bumping, or politely decline to touch at all. Try to avoid touching common surfaces others touch in public places and in your apartment building or common areas as best you can. Don't share food or drinks.

3. Avoid touching your face

No matter how hard you try, you're going to touch unsanitary surfaces or people. To prevent infecting yourself, do your best to refrain from touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as these are the main entry points for disease.

4. Cover your mouth

If you must cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a tissue, then throw the tissue into a trash can that has a closed cover. The same goes for blowing your nose. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve like you're doing "The Dab," not into your hands.

5. Maybe forgo that face mask

According to the CDC, people who are not sick (or don't feel sick) should not wear protective face masks, because they're not effective in keeping out the very small virus. Face masks are only for people who are already symptomatic to prevent them from spreading the disease to others. The only exception is for healthcare workers or other close-contact care providers.

6. Clean and disinfect

Keep your apartment neat, clean and organized to maintain a healthy environment. Clean regularly and sanitize often using items like Lysol spray and Clorox wipes on "high touch" surfaces including countertops, tabletops, doorknobs, nightstands, bathroom fixtures, toilets, refrigerator handles, kitchen faucets, light switches, TV remotes, cell phones, computer keyboards and tablets.

7. Stock up but don't hoard

While unlikely, it's possible you may wind up quarantined in your apartment, or even just sick and self-quarantining. For that scenario, which shouldn't last longer than two weeks, you should stock up (but not hoard) a few basic items:

- Non-perishable items like canned meat, fish, beans, soups, broths and stews, fruits and vegetables, and canned or powdered milk
- Ready to serve items like peanut butter, jelly, crackers, nuts, trail mix, dried fruits and granola bars
- Baby food and pet food
- Bottled water, fruit juices and fluids like Pedialyte or Gatorade
- Toothpaste, toilet paper, tissues, feminine supplies, diapers, laundry detergent and disinfectant
- Hand sanitizer that's minimum 60 percent alcohol, over-the-counter cold and flu medicines and any refills of prescriptions

Coronavirus protection in your apartment building or community

When you live in a public space like an apartment complex, protections from coronavirus become more communal. Precautions are no different than the CDC encourages you to take in your own home, but the difference is you don't have control of everything that happens.

Here are some suggestions for protections based on CDC recommendations.

1. Close the garbage

All trash cans, both outdoor plastic garbage cans and lobby wastebaskets, ought to have working lids which should be kept closed. No one wants to, or should be forced to, pick up used tissues that have fallen on the ground.

2. Don't come in if you're sick

Apartment management should implement flexible sick leave policies and make sure all workers and staff know that their jobs are safe and they won't be docked pay for staying home if they're sick. Sick employees will only spread infections to residents. Ask management to ensure all contractors are following the same policies.

3. Be transparent and communicative

All employees, residents and visitors should be encouraged to alert property management if they believe they might have contracted coronavirus, especially if they have used common areas. That way, other residents and staff can be notified and take appropriate precautions.

4. Stay home

Unless it's to see your doctor or go to the hospital, stay in your apartment and don't go out. Don't go to work, school or to public areas. Try to avoid public transportation, taxicabs or rideshares. Not only will you not infect others, the more you stay at home and rest, the faster you'll recover. Utilize food and personal item delivery if necessary.

5. Separate yourself from others at home

As best you can, stay in a designated sick room and keep away from other people. Eat separately from others. If your apartment has more than one, designate a bathroom just for you. Avoid touching pets, as well. If you must feed or clean up after a pet, wash your hands before and after as detailed above.

6. Don't share household or personal items

Set aside drinking glasses, plates, silverware, sheets and blankets, towels and toiletries for your use and your use only. Clean them thoroughly with soap and water after every single use.

7. Wear a face mask

As mentioned above, only people who are already sick (or people caring for those that are) need to wear a face mask. If you're sick, wear one around other people (or pets) or if you go see your doctor.

8. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands

9. Clean and disinfect even more

Sanitize your apartment as explained above, but do it every day.

10. Call before going to the doctor

Keep an eye on your symptoms and seek medical attention if needed. Give them a heads up before you go to allow them to take precautions to keep others visiting their office from being infected or exposed. If you suspect you only have a cold or flu, consider a virtual doctor's visit. If you must call 9-1-1, inform them of your symptoms before they arrive, as well.