

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CAREGIVERS OF SOMEONE WHO IS IN HOME CARE ISOLATION AS A PRECAUTION TO SPREADING COVID-19**

**Updated: March 26, 2020**

If you are providing care for a person infected or suspected to be infected with COVID-19, this document will help provide important information on how to best be able to help.

Individuals who have close contact with these patients should closely monitor their health and call their health care provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough or troubles breathing). Ideally, those who have had close contact (within 6 feet) for prolonged periods of time with someone experiencing symptoms thought to be COVID-19, should also isolate themselves at home/residence. Close contact is defined as:

- Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case OR
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

Ideally, other household members who do not have symptoms and have not had close contact with the COVID-19 positive or suspected patient would serve as the primary caregiver during this time.

That person should follow these recommendations:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their health care provider's instructions for care. You should help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her health care provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed or is under investigation for COVID-19. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected. Ask the health care provider to call the local or state health department for additional guidance if necessary. If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has, or is being evaluated for COVID-19.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.

- Perform hand cleansing frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- You and the patient should wear a facemask if you are in the same room
- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit or urine.
- Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
- When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items. If possible, use disposable plates, utensils and glasses. If not possible, after the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see below "Wash laundry thoroughly").
- Clean all high-touch surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product
- Wash laundry thoroughly
  - Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them
  - Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after removing your gloves.
  - Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, using a normal laundry detergent according to washing machine instructions and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Discuss any additional questions with your health care provider and/or your state or local health department.

For further information, please refer to [Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Known or Patients Under Investigation for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in a Healthcare Setting](#)