

# COVID 19 Outbreak Patient/Family Home Resource Handout

## What to do if you are sick and it is likely COVID 19.

### Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride sharing, or taxis.

### Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

**People:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. In addition, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

**Animals:** Do not handle pets or other animals while sick, if possible.

### Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from being infected or exposed.

### Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

### Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trashcan; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% 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 sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

### Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% 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.

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## Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. 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.

## Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing) either by calling a COVID hotline, seeking a virtual visit (listed on first page) or calling your healthcare provider. **Before** seeking care in person, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from being infected or exposed.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or may have COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

## ENDING ISOLATION

**Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms** and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)  
AND
- other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)  
AND
- at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

**Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms** may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.

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## INFORMATION FOR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS, INTIMATE PARTNERS AND CAREGIVERS OF PERSONS WITH SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

Household members, intimate partners, and caregivers may have close contact<sup>1</sup> with a person with symptomatic COVID-19 either lab proven or likely based on symptoms. Close contacts should monitor their health; they should call a hotline, seek virtual care or contact their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath).

Close contacts should also follow these recommendations:

Close contacts should also follow these recommendations:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and 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 healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has or may have COVID-19 or call the hotlines or seek a virtual visit. If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has or may have 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 airflow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.
- Perform hand hygiene 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.
- The patient should wear a facemask when you are around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room as the patient.
- 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, urine.
  - Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.

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<sup>1</sup> Close contact is defined as—

a) 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 –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

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- 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. 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 state or local health department or healthcare provider. Check available hours when contacting your local health department.

# **COVID 19 Outbreak Patient/Family Home Resource Handout**

**When to seek Emergency Medical Care** (any one of the following, may seek care for other reasons also)

- Moderate to severe difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest (not just with coughing)
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

**Below are various health systems hotlines, links to virtual visits and general information on COVID-19.**

CDC Site <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

## **Northwestern Medicine**

Northwestern Medicine COVID-19 Hotline **1-312-47COVID (1-312-472-6843)**

General Information <https://www.nm.org/covid-19>

## **Advocate Aurora**

Advocate Aurora COVID-19 Hotline **1-866-443-2584**

Information & virtual visits <https://www.advocateaurorahealth.org/coronavirus-disease-2019>

## **Mercy**

Virtual Mercy visits <https://mercyhealthsystem.org/service/virtual-visit-now/>

General information <https://mercyhealthsystem.org/alert/coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>