



Home Care Isolation Instructions for Patients and Their Caregivers when COVID-19 is Suspected or Confirmed

These instructions on home isolation and care are for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and those helping them at home. It is for:

- Patients going home after being in the hospital who still need to be isolated from others, or
- Patients who are sick and may have COVID-19, but do not need hospital care, or
- Patients who do not have symptoms but have tested positive for COVID-19

Instructions for the patient

You should isolate yourself at home. This means not going out and staying away from others, even members of your own household, as much as possible. This is to help keep the virus from spreading.

Stay home unless your symptoms are getting worse and you need medical care.

- Do not go to work, school, stores, or other public areas.
- Use food delivery or ask friends and family to get food and other needed items for you.
- Do not leave your home except to get essential medical care.
 - If you have an important in-person medical appointment, call the office ahead of time and tell them you have or may have COVID-19.
 - Put on a facemask or cloth face cover before you enter any healthcare facility (including doctor's office, x-ray facility, blood draw location, etc.).
- If you must leave your home for an essential appointment or for any other reason, do not use public transportation, ride-sharing (Uber, Lyft), or taxis.
- If you are having trouble getting the things you need or getting to an essential appointment, please call the Social Work department at the hospital where you receive your care to talk about ideas that might help.

Get help right away if your symptoms get worse

- Call 911 for emergencies. You and your caregiver should watch for the following symptoms. If any of them occur, call 911 and tell the operator that you have or may have COVID-19. **Call 911 if you have:**
 - Trouble breathing
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion or trouble waking up
 - Bluish lips or face
- **Call your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner** right away if you have any new symptoms, but especially for the symptoms below. Remember, your primary care provider, or someone covering for them, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call for:
 - New or worsening cough or respiratory symptoms
 - A new fever (100.4F/38C) or a return of a fever after your fevers were gone for several days

Separate yourself from others in your home

- Although scientists are still learning about how COVID-19 spreads, we do know that if you are in close contact with others (closer than 6 feet), virus particles from your breath or from a cough or sneeze can spread to someone else. This is why you must stay away from others for now.
- If you can, stay in a separate room by yourself. If possible, this room should be well ventilated, with an open window, weather permitting.
- Use a separate bathroom and bedroom if possible.
- Eat meals in a separate room.
- Do not have any visitors.
- If you need to be in the same room as another person, stay at least 6 feet apart. You and others in the room should wear a mask or face cover as instructed below. No touching, hugging, or kissing others.
- If possible, avoid people with chronic illnesses (such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease), people over 60 years old, pregnant women, or people with illnesses or treatments that suppress the immune system. This is important because if these people get COVID-19, they have an increased chance of becoming very sick. (However it's important to remember: even young, healthy people can get very sick from COVID-19.)
- Because it is unknown if pets can spread the virus, avoid contact with pets and other animals. If you need to have contact with pets, wash your hands before and after and wear a mask or face cover.

Use face coverings if you need to be close to others

- If you need to be in a room with others, everyone should wear a fitted mask that covers the mouth and nose. If you do not have a mask, use a cloth face cover (such as a scarf or bandanna, or a home-made mask). This short video explains how you can quickly make a mask at home: www.bit.ly/3eiyx8g

- If the mask or face cover gets wet or dirty, replace it with a clean, dry one. When removing it from your face, don't touch the front part that was over your nose and mouth. Don't touch your nose, mouth, or eyes.

Clean your hands often

- If virus particles are on your hands, you can spread them to surfaces that you touch. If someone else touches that surface, they can get sick. Washing or sanitizing your hands helps remove the virus particles.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Be especially sure to wash with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Use disposable paper towels to dry your hands. If these are not available, use clean dry cloth towels to dry your hands and replace them when they become damp from repeated use.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they are dry.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze

- If you have COVID-19 (or any respiratory virus), particles of the virus are forcefully pushed out into the air when you cough or sneeze.
- Be sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow. Don't use your hands. If you forget and you cover your cough or sneeze with your hands, wash your hands right away.
- Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and then wash your hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water or in the dishwasher.

Cleaning and disinfecting

- You should clean any areas in your personal bathroom or bedroom if they become soiled.
- If a separate bathroom is not available, you should clean and disinfect the shared bathroom after each use. If you are not able to do this yourself, someone who is helping you at home should clean and disinfect the things you touched. They should wait as long as possible after you've used the bathroom before cleaning it. But it must be cleaned before someone else uses it.
- If you live with others, someone else in your home should clean and disinfect all shared, frequently-touched surfaces in common areas every day. This includes counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, laundry hampers, and light switches. It's best if you are not the one cleaning common areas, because this puts you in close contact with things that other people touch.
- For cleaning, first use a regular household cleaning soap or detergent on the surface if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A link to EPA-registered agents is included at the end of this handout. Refer to product instructions, use gloves, and ensure adequate ventilation when cleaning and disinfecting. You can also use a diluted household bleach solution as a disinfectant if it is appropriate for the surface being cleaned. Use 5 tablespoons of concentrated bleach per gallon of water. Refer to product instructions, make sure the bleach is not past its expiration date, and be sure to leave the solution on the surface you are cleaning for at least one minute. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners.

Instructions for washing clothes

- Use regular detergent for washing.
- Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above. If possible, consider placing a bag liner into the hamper that can be thrown away or washed.

- If someone is helping you with laundry, they should wear gloves when handling your dirty laundry. They should wash their hands after removing gloves.

Disposing of gloves, masks, and other contaminated items

- Gloves used for cleaning should be disposable if possible and should be thrown away after each use. If reusable gloves are used, they should be used only for cleaning and disinfecting for COVID-19 and should not be used for other reasons.
- Clean your hands after removing your gloves.
- Place all used disposable gloves, disposable masks, and other contaminated items in a trash bag before disposing of them with other household waste.
- Clean your hands after handling these items.

When to stop home isolation

Because COVID-19 is a new disease, as we learn more about it, the guidelines on isolation and treatments are changing frequently. Your doctor or nurse practitioner will tell you when you can stop home isolation. This is not the same for everyone. It depends on several factors including when you first felt sick or had a positive COVID-19 test, whether you have had any symptoms, and whether you have an illness or are undergoing a treatment that suppresses your immune system.

Please be sure you understand when you can stop your home isolation. If you have any questions, ask your doctor or nurse practitioner.

If you are off isolation, but you have a medical appointment

In some cases, patients who are off home isolation still need to be cared for using special precautions if they have to come back to the hospital for an outpatient visit or an inpatient stay. You will be told if this applies to you. Please ask any questions you may have about any precautions that are needed.

Additional instructions for caregivers and household contacts

- Ideally, one person who is in good health should be the primary helper/caregiver.
- Read the above information thoroughly.
- If you are in the same room with the sick or COVID-positive person, you need to wear a mask or face cover, even if the sick person is also wearing one. Wash your hands frequently as directed above.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- You (caregiver/helper) should clean frequently touched surfaces, as described above. If needed, you may help wash/clean the sick/COVID-positive person's clothes, dishes, and personal space/bathroom if they cannot. Do so only as needed to avoid unnecessary contact with them or with things they have touched. Wear gloves. Use disposable gloves if they are available. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and items for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Always wash your hands after removing gloves.
- Monitor the sick/COVID-positive person for worsening symptoms as directed above.
- Monitor yourself for symptoms for at least 14 days after the person you are helping is off isolation. Monitor for:
 - fever (temperature of 100.4F/38C or more)
 - cough
 - shortness of breath
 - sore throat
 - body aches/chills
 - diarrhea
 - loss of taste or smell
- Call your healthcare provider if you develop these symptoms and inform them you are a close contact of someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

Tips to help your recovery

Recovery and home isolation can be difficult, physically and emotionally, especially if you've had COVID-19 illness. Here are some tips that may help.

- Be sure to rest and drink plenty of fluid.
- Stick to a routine; get dressed every day.
- If you feel up for it, try to stay active. It is not necessary or helpful to stay in bed. Walk laps in your room, or try some online yoga or exercise videos. Take care not to overexert yourself.
- Make a point to connect with those close to you by phone, email, video call, or texting.
- Develop a "self-care toolkit." What helps you relax? It may be journaling, reading, yoga, music. Use your toolkit frequently.
- Remind yourself that this is temporary.

This material was developed by BILH clinicians and is adapted from information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>



Stay at home and separate yourself from others

- Stay at home until your isolation period is over.
- Stay in a room away from other household members if possible. Use a separate bathroom if you have one.
- Do not share dishes/utensils, towels, or bed sheets with others in your home.



When to call 911

Call 911 if you have:

- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or trouble waking up
- Blue lips or face



Wear a mask or face cover if you must be with others

- If you must be in a room with others, you and the others in the room should cover the nose and mouth with a face mask or face cover. You must also use a face mask or face cover if you go out to an essential appointment.



Wash your hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands right after you have sneezed, coughed, or blown your nose, before eating, and when your hands look dirty.



Cover coughs & sneezes

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Put used tissues in the trash. Then wash your hands.



Clean & disinfect

- You (the patient) should clean your personal space and your bathroom if you can. Someone else in the home should clean areas that are touched by everyone.
- Clean with soap and water or a household cleaner, then disinfect.
- To disinfect, use a household disinfectant or a mix of 5 tablespoons of concentrated bleach with one gallon of water. Use gloves. Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaners.

Please call your doctor or nurse practitioner if you have any other symptoms that worry you or if you have any questions about your care.

Use a Face Cover to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

Who should wear a face cover?

All people should wear a face cover when going out in public. At home, people who are sick should wear a face cover if they are in the same room with others, and the other people in the room should wear one too.

What is a face cover?

A face cover is any well fitted cloth (such as a bandanna or scarf) that covers the mouth and nose and stays attached to your face while you are wearing it.

How to clean a cloth face cover

Wash the face cover with soap and water or use a washing machine every day.

How to make a face cover

You can make a face cover by using a scarf, small towel, bandanna , or an old T-shirt. It should fit snugly to your mouth and over your nose. A thicker fabric is better to keep germs out. Once you are sure it covers your mouth and nose, it can be secured behind your ears with rubber bands or tied behind your head.

View this short video to see how to make one at home: www.bit.ly/3eiyx8g



Dos and Don'ts for face covers

Do:

- ✓ Make sure you can breathe through it
- ✓ Wear if you must be out in public and any time you are close to others
- ✓ Make sure it covers your nose and mouth
- ✓ Wash each day and any time it is wet or dirty
- ✓ Dry the face cover before you put it on

Do NOT:

- ✗ Touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when you take off the cover
- ✗ Touch the front part of the face cover when taking it off
- ✗ Use for kids less than two years old
- ✗ Use if you have trouble breathing