

FACT SHEET

COVID-19 INFECTION CONTROL FOR CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

WHAT IS COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, especially among people who are in close contact with one another, which means about 6 feet. Family members, caregivers, and other individuals may have close contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19. Those who are in close contact should monitor their health and report to a healthcare provider immediately if symptoms develop that suggest possible COVID-19 infection. “The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Headaches
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Nausea
 - Diarrhea

Other symptoms such as trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, and difficulty staying awake indicate signs of severe illness. Seek emergency care for someone with these symptoms.” (CDC, 2021)

COVID-19 may also be present without symptoms (asymptomatic).

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, March 17). Things to Know about the COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/need-to-know.html>

TIPS FOR CARING FOR A PERSON WITH COVID-19

- **LIMIT CONTACT WITH THE PERSON WITH COVID-19**

Limit people coming into the home to those who provide care. Restrict visitors who do not need to be in the home. When possible, have other household members stay at another home or place of residence. If this is not possible, strongly encourage the person with COVID-19 to stay in a different area or room away from others and to use a separate bathroom. If a separate bathroom is not available, disinfect the common bathroom after every use. When possible open the window to improve air flow in the space.

- **ASSIST THE PERSON TO MANAGE SYMPTOMS**

Keep the person at home and as comfortable as possible. Ensure that you understand and are able to assist the person with COVID-19 to understand and follow instructions from healthcare provider related to medication and care. Help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide ongoing support for getting groceries, medications, and various personal items. Monitor the person's symptoms and call a healthcare provider if symptoms worsen. If a medical emergency occurs, call 9-1-1 and notify the dispatcher that the person has COVID-19.

- **PROPERLY USE A MASK AND GLOVES**

The person who is ill should wear a face mask when near other people. For a mask to work properly, it must fit snugly on sides of the face, cover the nose and mouth and fit securely under the chin. Exceptions may be made if the ill person has trouble breathing, is unable to remove mask by themselves or is under the age of 2. Anyone entering a room with an ill person should have a mask in place before entering the room. Wear a disposable mask and gloves when touching the person or in contact with his or her body fluids. Dispose of masks and gloves after use. Do not reuse. Wash hands after removal of mask and gloves.

- **WASH HANDS**

Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

- **CLEAN AND DISINFECT**

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as tables, countertops, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, phones, touch screens, remote controls, keyboards, and electronics, with household cleaners and disinfectants daily.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe and effective use. Avoid sharing household items.

- **KEEP THE ENVIRONMENT CLEAN**

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as tables, countertops, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, phones, touch screens, remote controls, keyboards, and electronics, with household cleaners and disinfectants daily.

“Clean the area with soap and water if it is dirty, then use a household disinfectant.” Use a product designed for Coronavirus and follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

- **LAUNDRY CARE**

A sick person’s dirty laundry can be washed with other people’s laundry. Wear disposable gloves when handling soiled items and do not shake the laundry. Wash items using the warmest temperature recommended on the laundry care labels. Remove gloves and wash hands immediately. After laundry is washed, dry items completely on the warmest temperature according to the laundry care labels. Clean and disinfect laundry baskets.

- **CARE OF DISHES AND UTENSILS**

Do not share dishes, utensils, cups, and glasses, with a person who is ill. Wash such items thoroughly after used or touched. Be sure to wear gloves and use soap and hot water, or a dishwasher if available. Wash hands after removing gloves.

- **HANDLING TRASH**

CDC guidelines state that handling and management of trash should be completed in accordance with routine procedures, including:

- Wearing gloves when handling trash.
- Placing trash and soiled gloves in designated lined containers.
- Washing hands.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, February 11).

Caring for Someone Sick at Home. Retrieved from

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>

WHEN CAN PEOPLE WHO HAD COVID-19 OR WHO WERE EXPOSED TO COVID-19 BE AROUND OTHERS?

The CDC states the answer varies based on different situations. For full guidance on this topic visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

- “For those who think or know they had COVID-19 and they had symptoms:
 - 10 days after symptoms first appeared AND
 - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication AND

- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving
- **For those who tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms:**
 - If you continue to have no symptoms, you may be around others after 10 days have passed since the positive viral test for COVID-19
- **For those who were severely ill with COVID-19 or who have a weakened immune system:**
 - People who are severely ill might need to stay home between 10-20 days after symptoms first appeared
 - People who are severely immunocompromised might require testing to determine when they can be around others
 - Seek guidance from your healthcare provider.
- **For those who have been around a person with COVID-19:**
 - Stay home for 14 days after the **last exposure** to the person
 - If you meet the following criteria you do not need to stay home after exposure to someone with COVID-19:
 - Being fully vaccinated and having no symptoms of COVID-19 OR
 - Had COVID-19 illness within the last 3 months AND
 - Has recovered AND
 - Remains without COVID-19 symptoms”

(CDC, 2021)

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, March 12). When Can You Be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

TIPS FOR SHOPPING

- Stock up on non-perishable supplies to limit trips to the store
- Ensure adequate amounts of medication and medical supplies, such as oxygen, wound care items and incontinence supplies
- “Avoid shopping if you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Order online or use curbside pickup.
- Protect yourself while shopping
 - Wear a mask
 - Use hand sanitizer
 - Wipe carts with disinfecting wipes

- Maintain a distance of 6 feet from others
- Shop at hours designated for people at high risk if you fall into that category
- Consider shopping when stores are less crowded.
- Pay using a touchless system to prevent handing cards, bills and coins.
- Use hand sanitizer after leaving the store.
 - Once you bring the groceries home, wash your hands after unpacking the groceries.
 - Do not use disinfectants designed for hard surfaces on food wrapped in cardboard boxes or plastic wrap.
 - Disinfect counters or any other surfaces you have touched.” (CDC, 2020).

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020, December 31). Running Essential Errands. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html#grocery>

CAN A PERSON WITH COVID-19 CARE FOR PETS?

According to the CDC, “People with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should avoid contact with animals, including pets, livestock, and wildlife.” (CDC, 2021)

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, March 25). COVID-19 and Animals. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/animals.html>